
VIZ SELECT
GOTH
STORY BY Otsuichi ART BY Kendi Oiwa
EXPLICIT CONTENT
PARENTAL ADVISORY
EXPLICIT CONTENT



Story By Otsuichi
Art By Kendi Oiwa

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Story by Otsuichi
Art by Kendi Oiwa

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HIGH

[Story] Otsuichi

[Art] Kendi Oiwa

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I
Wrist-cut
ペラ
ペラ


SHE FIRST CAUGHT MY EYE...
...WHEN I SAW HER WHITE WRIST...
IT WAS PALE AS PORCELAIN...
...PEEKING OUT FROM THE EDGE OF DARKNESS.
...AND THE MARK LOOMED OUT FROM IT.


I
リストカット事件
wristcut

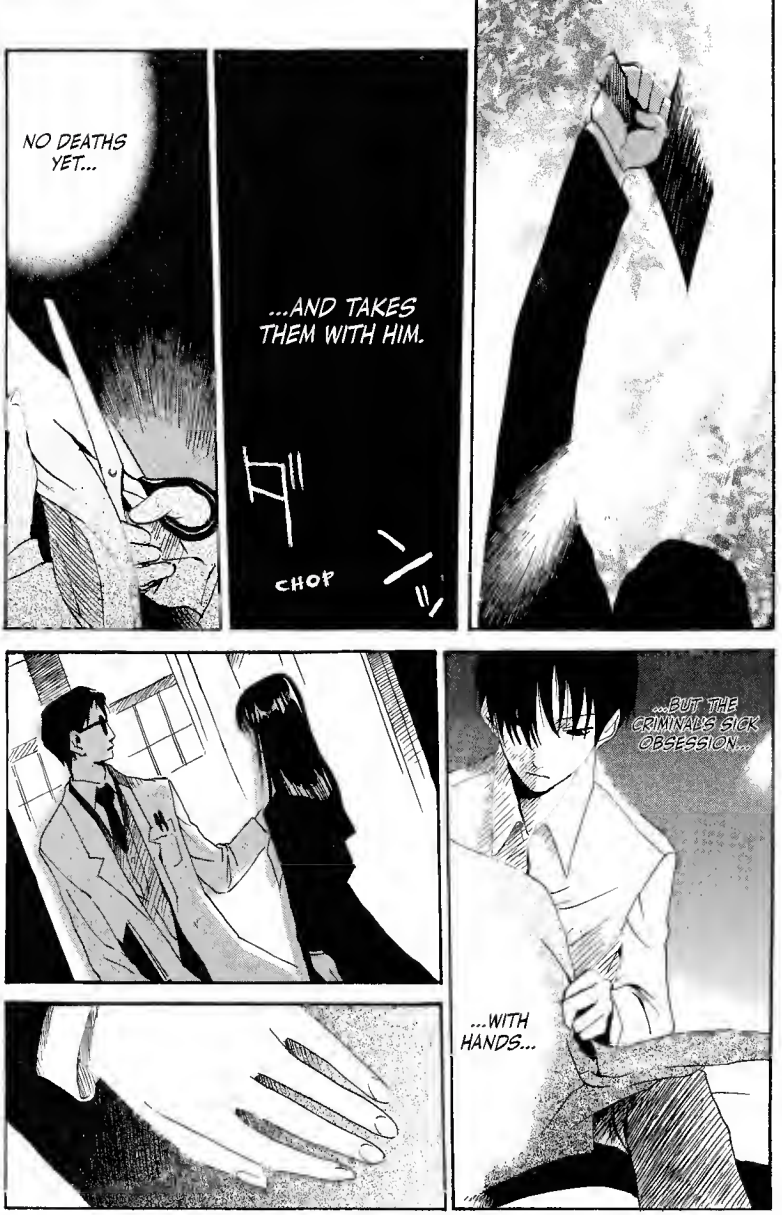

MORNIN'!
PLAYING ALONG WITH MY LIGHTHEARTED CLASSMATES IS EASY.
TOPICS ABOUT TV GET AUTOMATIC, APPROPRIATE REPLIES.
ON-AIR BATTLE, RIGHT?
THEN, I JUST FLASH THE FAKE SMILE.
YO!
DID YOU SEE IT YESTER-DAY?
NAH, THE NEWS!
THE ONE ABOUT THE HANDS GETTING CUT OFF.


I SAW IT!
AND THE GUY RUNS OFF WITH 'EM, RIGHT?
YEAH! IT'S SO DISGUSTING.
YEAH...THAT IS CREEPY.
WHO?
BY THE WAY, DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A WRIST CUTTER IN OUR SCHOOL, TOO?
MORINO, RIGHT? SHE HAS MARKS ON HER WRIST.
NO WAY! THAT'S SURPRISING, CONSIDERING SHE'S SO CUTE AND ALL.
WELL, SHE DOESN'T TALK MUCH, AND SHE IS SORT OF A LONER.


ペラ
SHE'S JUST SO WEIRD.
HMM...
ANYWAY, DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE'S A NEW SINGLE IN POP'N' MUSIC?
YOU WANNA STOP BY AFTER CLASS?
キーン
コーン
Aw man, I'm totally broke!
YES!


I'M NOT EXACTLY NORMAL.
SO I'VE HAD TO HIDE IT...
...EVER SINCE I WAS REALLY YOUNG.
キュ
キュ
ペキッ
ペキッ
ペキッ
I DON'T REMEMBER WHY I WANTED TO DO IT.


THE WRIST-CUT CASE...
連続7人目
SEVENTH WRIST-CUT INCIDENT
イヨキ
イヨキ
I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE CASE FOR A WHILE...
THE CRIMINAL CUTS OFF ALL KINDS OF HANDS...
ADULTS, CHILDREN, EVEN ANIMALS...


NO DEATHS YET...
...AND TAKES THEM WITH HIM.
CHOP
...BUT THE CRIMINAL'S SICK OBSESSION...
...WITH HANDS...

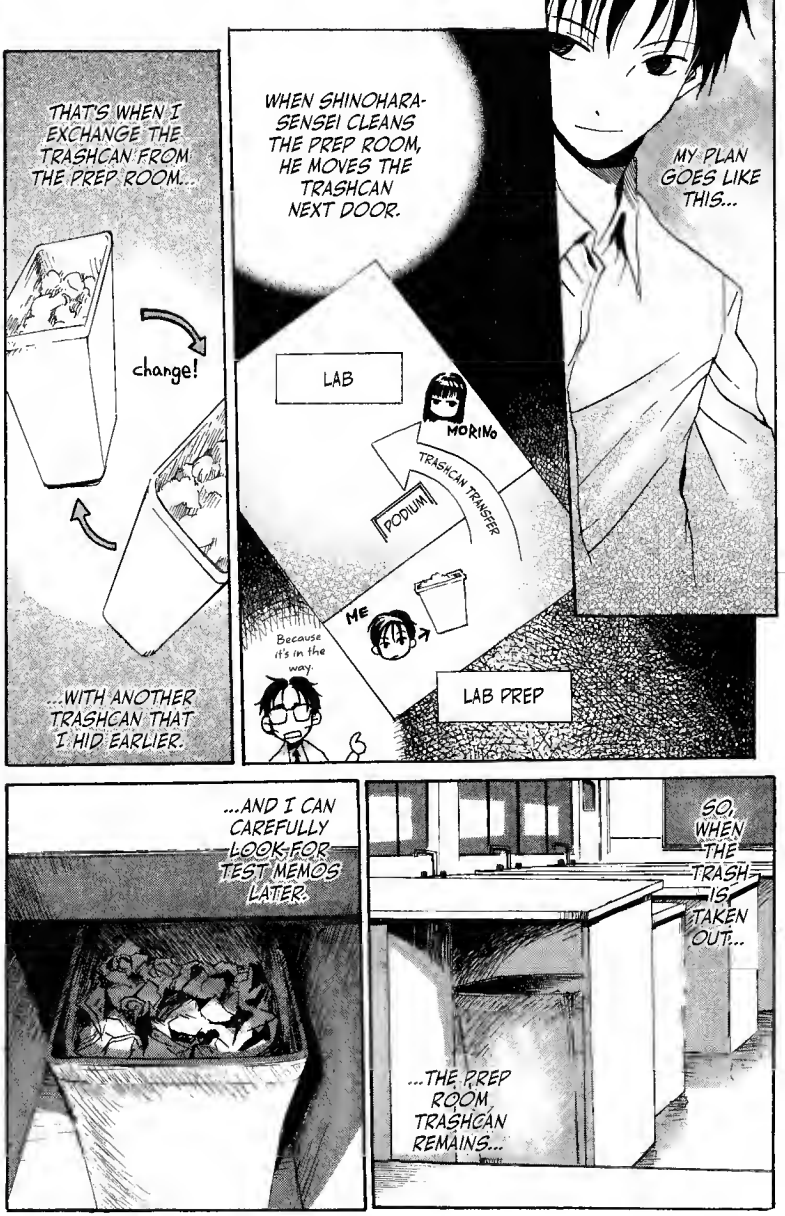

...ALSO EXISTS IN MY COLD-BLOODED SOUL.
I WANT A HAND, TOO.
MORINO'S HAND....


キーン
コーン
DON'T FORGET ABOUT THE QUIZ TOMORROW.
ANYONE WITH FREE TIME SHOULD COME AND HELP.
ALSO, I'M GOING TO CLEAN THE SCIENCE LAB DURING LUNCH BREAK.


LAB ROOM, EH?
SHINOHARA-SENSEI WRITES HIS TESTS IN THERE.
WHO THE HELL WOULD CHOOSE TO WASTE THEIR LUNCH BREAK?!
He's so stupid!
MAYBE HE'S TALKING TO INVISIBLE ELVES.
WHOA, THAT'S HARSH!
HA HA HA!
...HE THREW AWAY SOME MEMOS WITH THE TEST QUESTIONS.
MAYBE ...
CHEMISTRY LAB


I DIDN'T THINK ANYONE WOULD SHOW.
NO PROBLEM.
HEY, THANKS FOR HELPING OUT!
WELL, FIRST, TAKE THAT TRASHCAN TO THE ROOM NEXT DOOR.
OKAY.
!


スッ
……
NO PROBLEM THOUGH …
コトッ
スッ
IT'S MORINO …


MY PLAN GOES LIKE THIS...
WHEN SHINOHARA-SENSEI CLEANS THE PREP ROOM, HE MOVES THE TRASHCAN NEXT DOOR.
LAB
MORINO
TRASHCAN TRANSFER
PODIUM
ME
LAB PREP
Because it's in the way.
THAT'S WHEN I EXCHANGE THE TRASHCAN FROM THE PREP ROOM...
change!
...WITH ANOTHER TRASHCAN THAT I HID EARLIER.
SO, WHEN THE TRASH IS TAKEN OUT...
...THE PREP ROOM TRASHCAN REMAINS...
...AND I CAN CAREFULLY LOOK FOR TEST MEMOS LATER.


DID YOU SEE A GIRL IN THERE?
SHE STAYS IN THAT ROOM FOR LUNCH.
MY SISTER'S HAIR IS LIKE THAT, TOO.
ISN'T LONG, JET-BLACK HAIR LIKE HERS...
...RARE THESE DAYS?
ゴォォ
YEAH...?


OKAY, SEE YOU LATER.


?
THIS DOLL...THE HAND...


ポ
トッ
IT'S CUT OFF.
I'M HOME.
ガ"
ガ"
ガ"
ガ"
コト
ス"


WELCOME HOME.


YOU HAD A LONG DAY, DIDN'T YOU?
WELCOME HOME.
COME...


WHAT DOES THE CULPRIT OF THE WRIST-CUT CASE...
...DO WITH ALL THOSE HANDS?


EVEN THOUGH I FOUND A DOLL LIKE THIS...
...I CAN'T JUST ASSUME THAT HE'S THE ONE.
BUT IF HE IS THE ONE, WHERE WOULD THE HANDS BE?
THERE IS A FACULTY MEETING TODAY...
...SO DON'T COME INTO THE FACULTY ROOM WITHOUT A GOOD REASON.
OH, I FORGOT TO MENTION SOME-THING...


THE POSSIBILITY ...
ゴトン
ガタン
...CAN'T BE RULED OUT.
ゴトン
ガタン

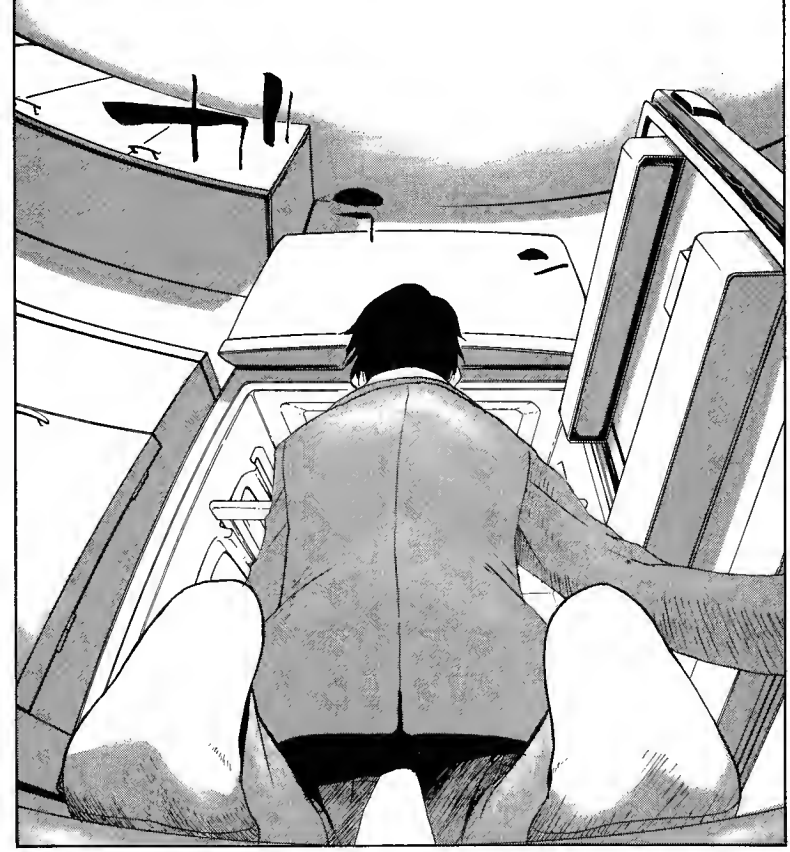

SHINOHARA

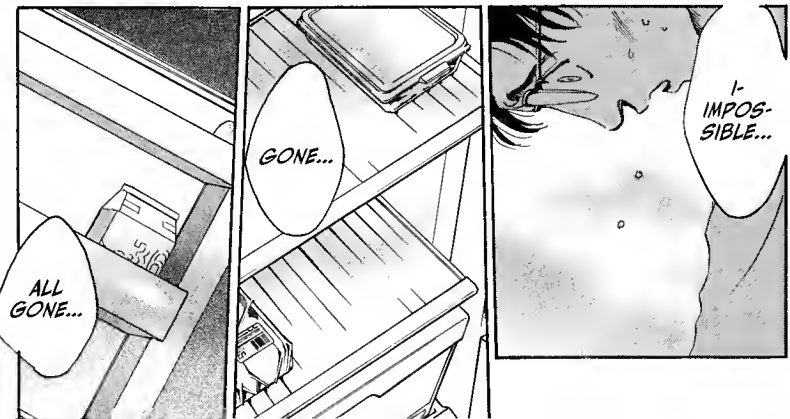

CALM DOWN...
ALL THERE IS ON THE SECOND FLOOR IS A COMPUTER AND SOME BOOKS.
I GUESS SHINOHARA-SENSEI HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CASE AFTER ALL...


WELL...HE'S STILL AT THE FACULTY MEETING.
GUESS I'LL LOOK AROUND A LITTLE LONGER.
!


パッ

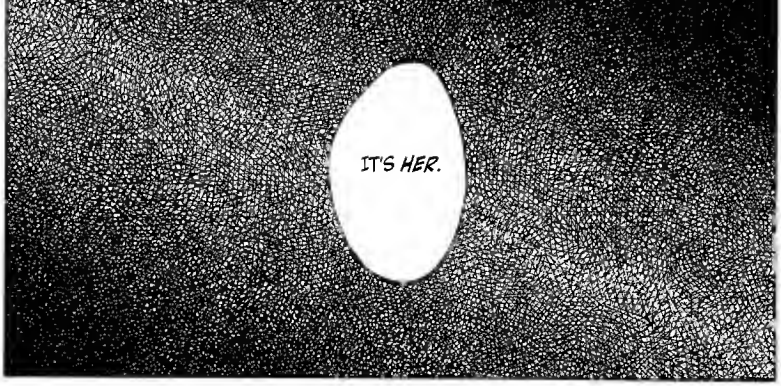

!
WHAT?!
IT CAN'T BE!

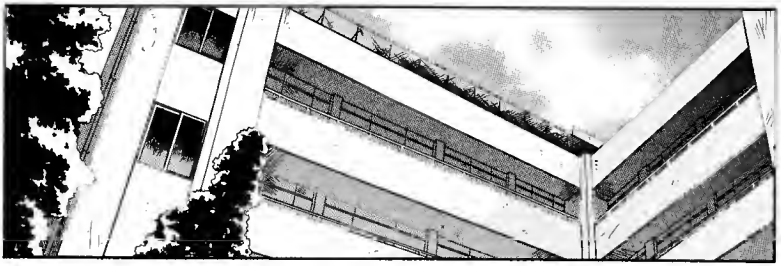



I-IMPOS-SIBLE...
GONE...
ALL GONE...


WHO WOULD DO THIS?!
DOG, CAT...
EVEN THE DOLL HANDS ARE MISSING!!!
WHY JUST THE HANDS?!
SHIT!


WHO WOULD STEAL JUST HANDS?
JUST THE HANDS?
.....?
IT'S AS IF THEY KNEW FROM THE START...
...THAT THE HANDS WERE HERE.
THAT'S IT!
I SEE HOW IT IS.
HA HA HA HA!


IT'S HER.




THEN...
...AFTER I CUT OFF HER HANDS...
FIRST, I'LL ASK HER WHERE SHE HID THEM.


I'LL KILL HER!
TELL ME WHERE YOU HID THE HANDS.
EVEN IF YOU DENY IT, I KNOW FOR A FACT IT WAS YOU.
ISTRY LAB
YES...
YOU EVEN STOLE THE DOLL'S HANDS, YES?
HOW COULD YOU TELL THAT IT WAS A HAND?
YOU FOUND THE DOLL DURING CLEANUP, DIDN'T YOU?


YOU PROBABLY TRIED VERY CAREFULLY TO LEAVE NO TRACE...
YOU SUSPECTED ME AND SNUCK INTO MY HOUSE...
...BUT YOU MADE A FATAL MISTAKE.
YOU LEFT EVIDENCE.


YORU
MORINO...


THIS IS YOUR HAIR, ISN'T IT?
?

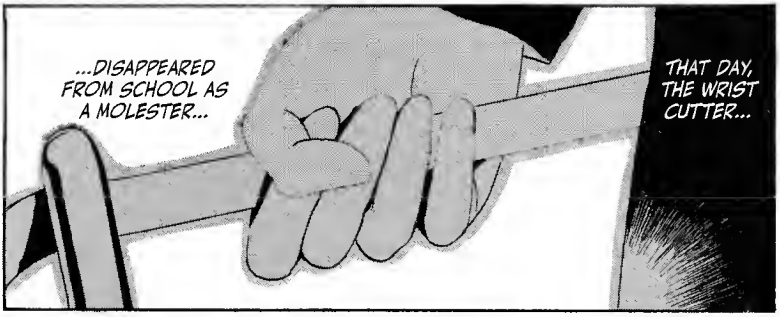

W-WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?!
LET ME GO!!
SENSEI ...
MY SISTER'S HAIR IS LONG AND BLACK TOO.
ANSWER ME!!
JUST LIKE HERS.


WHERE DID YOU PUT THE HANDS?!
!
TELL ME!
WHA~ ?!
Nng...
TELL ME!
!

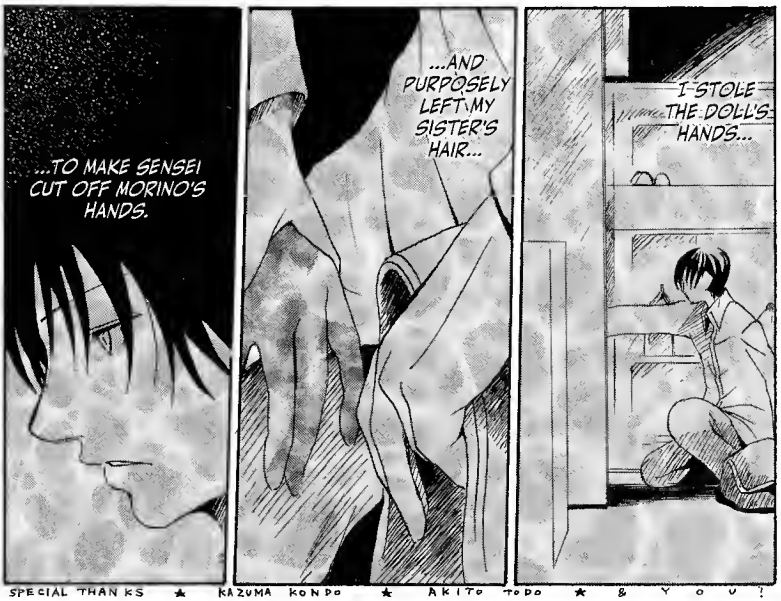

AHHHHHH!
UGH ...


SOMEONE HELP MEEEE!
!
!
!
!


WHAT'S WRONG?
WHAT HAPPEN-ED?!
HEY!
WHAT'S GOING ON?!
ERG ...
UHH ...
UGH ...
ERG ...



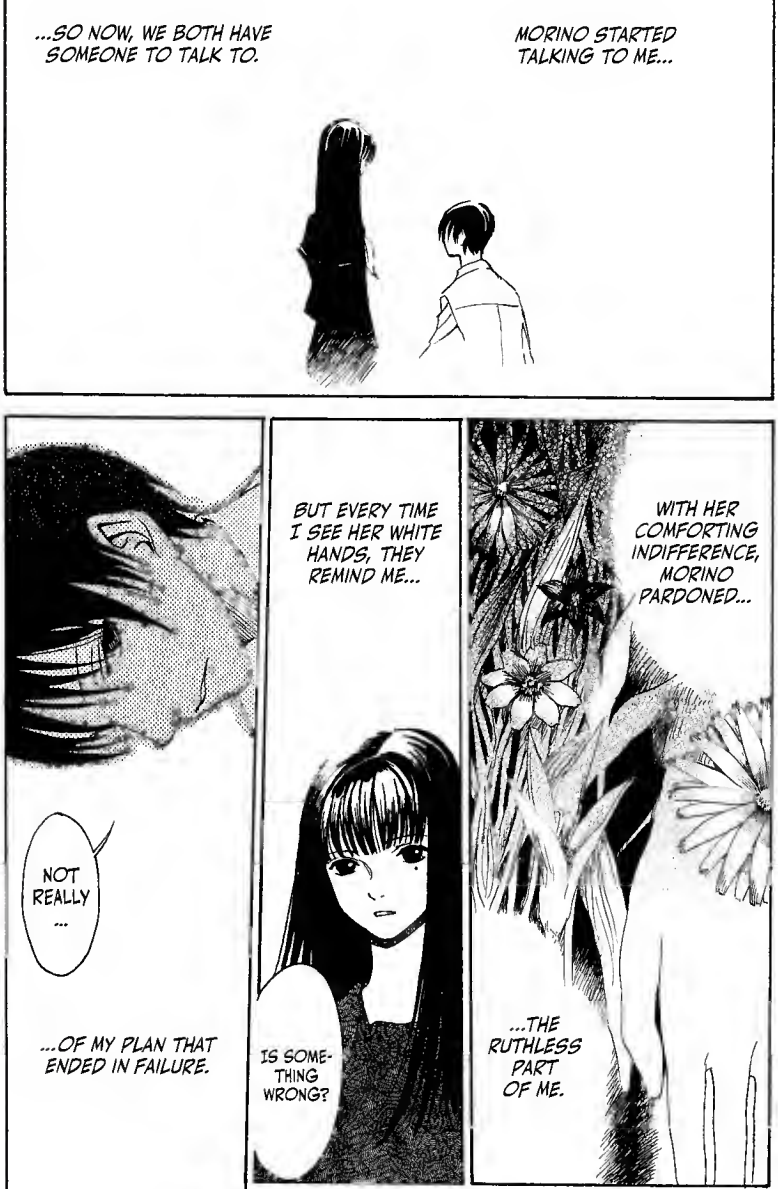




SPECIAL THANKS ★ KAZUMA KONDO ★ AKITO TODO ★ & YOU!




IT HAPPENED AROUND SPRINGTIME...
THAT WAS ONLY THE END OF MAY.
MORINO?
HEY.
CAN YOU TEACH ME HOW TO MAKE THAT FACIAL EXPRESSION TOO?


...SO NOW, WE BOTH HAVE SOMEONE TO TALK TO.
MORINO STARTED TALKING TO ME...
...OF MY PLAN THAT ENDED IN FAILURE.
NOT REALLY ...
IS SOMETHING WRONG?
BUT EVERY TIME I SEE HER WHITE HANDS, THEY REMIND ME...
...THE RUTHLESS PART OF ME.
WITH HER COMFORTING INDIFFERENCE, MORINO PARDONED...


THEY REMIND ME OF THE INCIDENT...
...THAT MADE ME WANT TO KILL MORINO.

Ⅱ

暗黒系

Goth

"THERE IS NO MEANING BEHIND THIS ACTION."

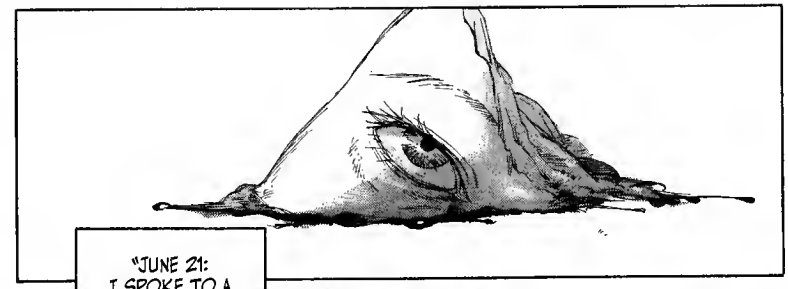


"BUT IT RESONATES IN MY MIND. IT HAS A HOLD ON ME AND WON'T LET GO."

case ;I


"MAY 10:"


"I DISSECTED A WOMAN NAMED MITSUE KUSUDA AT T MOUNTAIN, SLOWLY LETTING THE KNIFE GLIDE DOWN HER CHEST."



"JUNE 21:
I SPOKE TO A WOMAN CARRYING A SHOPPING BAG AS SHE WAITED FOR THE BUS. THE WOMAN CALLED HERSELF KASUMI NAKANISHI."

case ;2



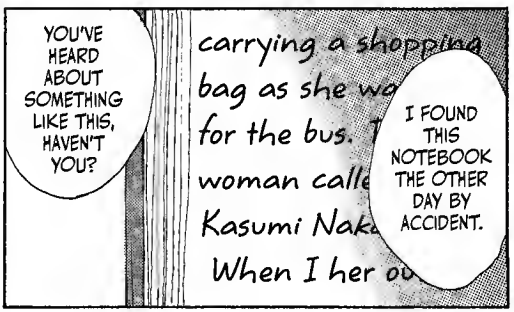
"...IN A CABIN ON H MOUNTAIN AFTER SHE BECAME SILENT, I BEGAN TO SPLIT HER BODY UP INTO PIECES. FIRST..."

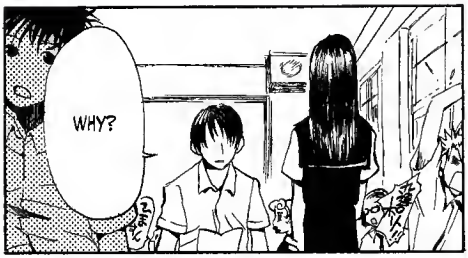



HOW IS IT?


MITSUE KUSUDA... KASUMI NAKANISHI ...
Hey!
THEY'RE THE VICTIMS OF THOSE BIZARRE SERIAL MURDERS THAT THE MEDIA'S GOING CRAZY OVER.

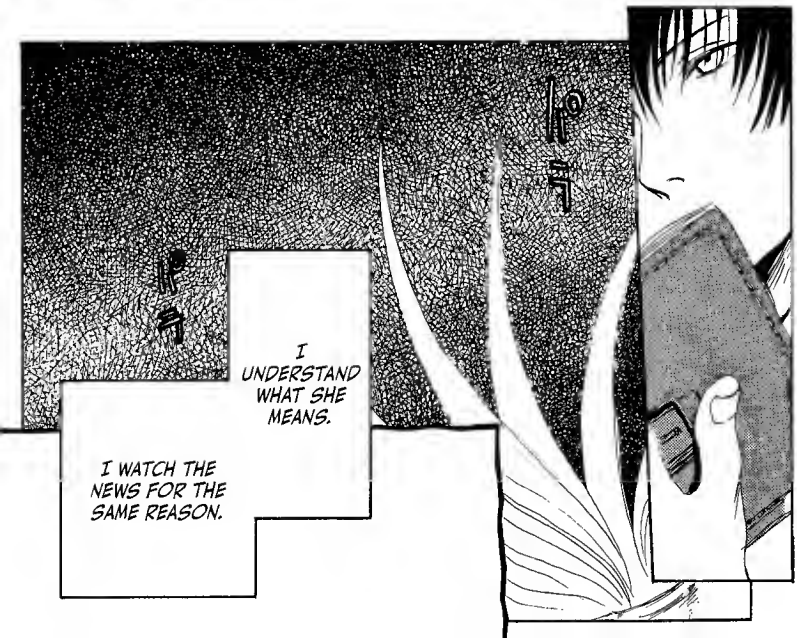


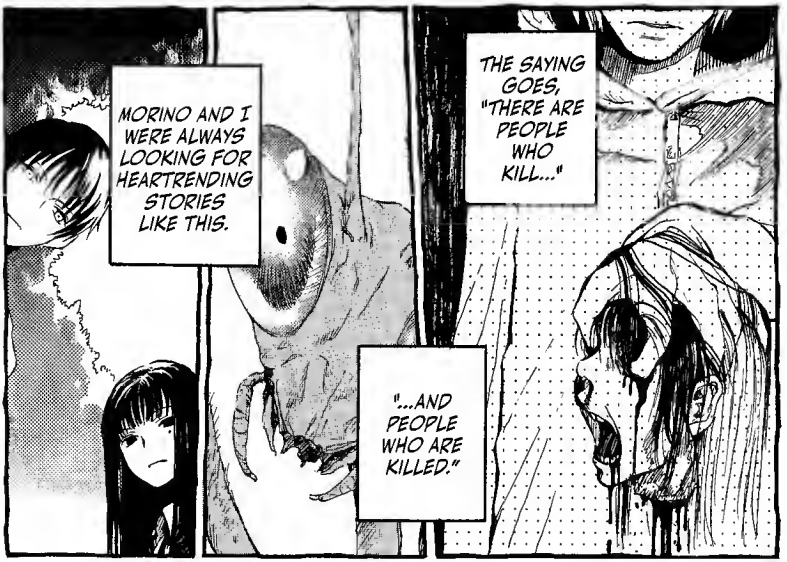

YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT SOMETHING LIKE THIS, HAVEN'T YOU?
carrying a shoppina
bag as she wa
for the bus. T
woman calle
Kasumi Nak
When I her ou
I FOUND THIS NOTEBOOK THE OTHER DAY BY ACCIDENT.

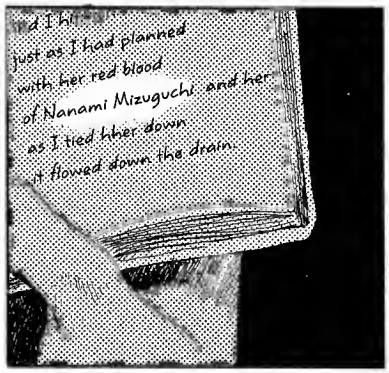

WHY?


YES...
I'VE BEEN FOLLOWING THE STORY ON THE NEWS.

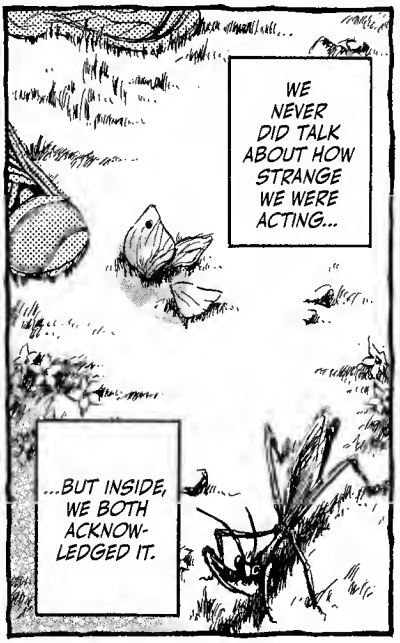

BECAUSE THE CASE IS SO WEIRD.


I UNDERSTAND WHAT SHE MEANS.
I WATCH THE NEWS FOR THE SAME REASON.


MORINO AND I WERE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR HEARTRENDING STORIES LIKE THIS.
THE SAYING GOES, "THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO KILL..."
"...AND PEOPLE WHO ARE KILLED."


...d I hi...
just as I had planned
with her red blood
of Nanami Mizuguchi and her
as I tied hher down
it flowed down the drain.




WE NEVER DID TALK ABOUT HOW STRANGE WE WERE ACTING...
...BUT INSIDE, WE BOTH ACKNOW-LEDGED IT.


"NANAMI MIZUGUCHI...I MET HER AT A SOBA RESTAURANT NEAR S MOUNTAIN.
WE PASSED A SHRINE WHEN WE WALKED INTO THE WOODS ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN. I FOLLOWED HER."
.....
WHERE DID YOU FIND THIS?
AT MY FAVORITE COFFEE SHOP. IT'S PRETTY COZY AND QUIET.
Punch myself!
Whoa!


THE NOTE-BOOK...
Let's goooo!
Listen to this song...
I win!
How is Ryan?
...MOST LIKELY BELONGS TO THE KILLER.
WAOO!
HAVE YOU HEARD THE NAME "NANAMI MIZUGUCHI" IN THE NEWS?
LET'S GO GET SOME SOBA TOMORROW.


IF ANOTHER VICTIM TURNS UP...
...IT'S OUR FAULT FOR NOT TURNING THE NOTEBOOK IN TO THE POLICE.
蕎麦
SOBA
I CAN'T STAND THAT FEELING.


I AM SO DONE WITH THIS...
WHY CAN'T WE FIND IT? WE'VE LOOKED FOR HOURS!
I'M TIRED OF THIS FILTHY PLACE! BUGS AND WEEDS EVERYWHERE!
IS THIS SOME KIND OF SICK JOKE? IF IT ALL ENDS UP BEING A LIE, THAT WOULD SUCK!
Shut up!
Damn, it's hot
?









THAT WAS OUR ENCOUNTER WITH NANAMI MIZUGUCHI.

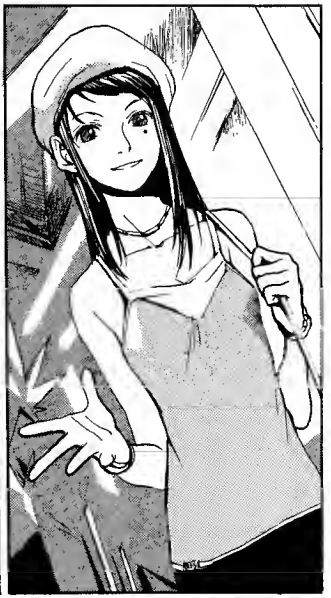
HER INTESTINES HAD TURNED BLACK AND WERE WRAPPED AROUND THE TREE. THERE WAS NOTHING LEFT TO SHOW WHAT SHE LOOKED LIKE BEFORE HER DEATH.

MAYBE THERE WASN'T ANYTHING IN THE FIRST PLACE.

RIGHT WHEN WE WERE ABOUT TO WALK AWAY, MORINO SILENTLY PICKED UP MIZUGUCHI'S CLOTHES LYING ON THE GROUND AND STUFFED THEM INTO HER BAG.


MORINO CONTACTED ME A FEW DAYS LATER.
SHE WANTED ME TO GIVE BACK THE NOTEBOOK THAT I ACCIDENTALLY TOOK HOME.
HELLO.
HEY, DID I KEEP YOU WAITING?
!


SEE? ISN'T THIS PLACE QUIET AND COZY?
.....
I THOUGHT IT WOULD TAKE YOU A WHILE TO FIND SINCE IT'S IN SUCH A CROWDED AREA.




HUH?
OH THIS?


So different.
WHAT'S UP WITH THAT LOOK?


HERE, SEE! THAT'S HOW SHE USED TO LOOK!

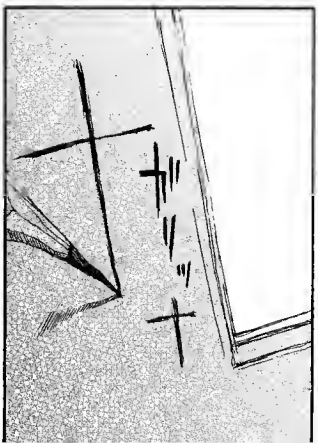

THIS IS ACTUALLY ONE OF HER BELONGINGS THAT I TOOK HOME THAT DAY.
Another note-book?


.....
I see.
WELL?

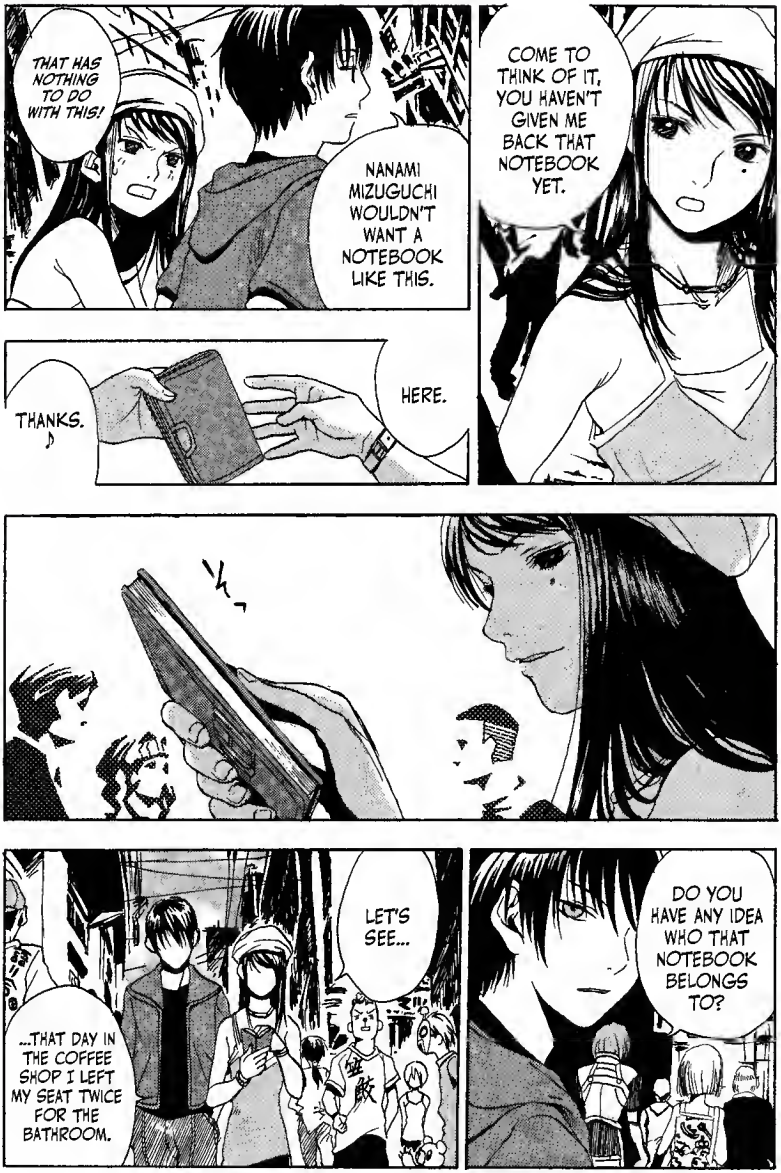

ARE YOU PLANNING ON STAYING IN THOSE CLOTHES FOR A WHILE?
NANAMI-MIZUGUCHI...
YES. IT'S EXCITING, ISN'T IT?
ALL RIGHT, READY TO GO?
YES.
HEH... YEAH.




RIGHT NOW...




...IT'S LIKE MY HAND IS BEING HELD...
...BY THE DEAD NANAMI MIZUGUCHI.


THAT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THIS!
NANAMI MIZUGUCHI WOULDN'T WANT A NOTEBOOK LIKE THIS.
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU HAVEN'T GIVEN ME BACK THAT NOTEBOOK YET.
HERE.
THANKS. ♪
LET'S SEE...
...THAT DAY IN THE COFFEE SHOP I LEFT MY SEAT TWICE FOR THE BATHROOM.
DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHO THAT NOTEBOOK BELONGS TO?


THE FIRST TIME I WENT TO THE BATHROOM, THERE WAS NOTHING ON THE GROUND.
BUT THEN IT STARTED TO POUR AND NO ONE EXCEPT FOR THE OWNER WALKED OUTSIDE.
THE CRIMINAL WAS PROBABLY ONE OF THE CUSTOMERS. HE PROBABLY LIVES IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD.
THAT'S WHEN I FOUND IT.
I SEE...


...A BAD FEELING WASHED OVER ME.
AFTER I SAID GOODBYE TO MORINO AT THE TRAIN STATION...
.....

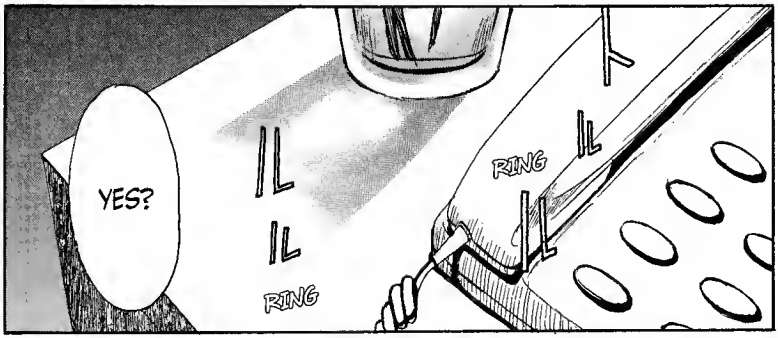

MITSUE KUSUDA, KASUMI NAKANISHI...AND...
...NANAMI MIZU-GUCHI.
Sakura! Take the soy sauce too!
OKAY
HOW?
HEY BROTHER, DOESN'T THIS PERSON LOOK LIKE THAT OTHER ONE?
NAKANISHI BEFO HER DEATH
YOU KNOW, SHE'S GOT THE SAME SORT OF VIBE AS THE LAST VICTIM.
.....

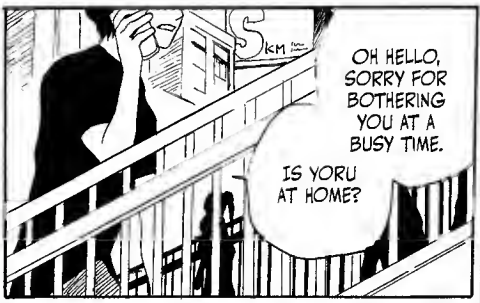

ブキキキ
THE TYPE THAT THE MURDERER HUNTS FOR...
PENANCE...
PENANCE...
PENANCE...
PENANCE...


TO MEDITATE OVER AN ACTION.
THE ACT OF REALIZING ONE'S SIN.
IF SIN IS ABSOLVED ...
WHAT IS LEFT TO EXPIATE?
TELL ME, WOULD YOU?

MMMPH!
MMMMMPH!
SORRY, BUT IT'S TIME FOR WORK. WE'LL CONTINUE LATER...
ピタ ーン


Morino
HELP
TWO DAYS AFTER I SAW MORINO...
CHIRP
CHIRP
...THERE WAS A TEXT FROM HER WHEN I WOKE UP.
BEEP
AS USUAL, ANOTHER BRIEF MESSAGE...
CAN'T TELL WHAT HAPPENED TO HER FROM THIS...
.....
NO ANSWER?

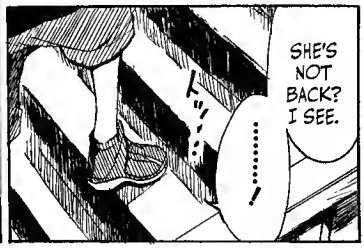

YES?
RING
RING


OH HELLO, SORRY FOR BOTHERING YOU AT A BUSY TIME.
IS YORU AT HOME?


YES.
YES.
HELLO, THIS IS MORINO.

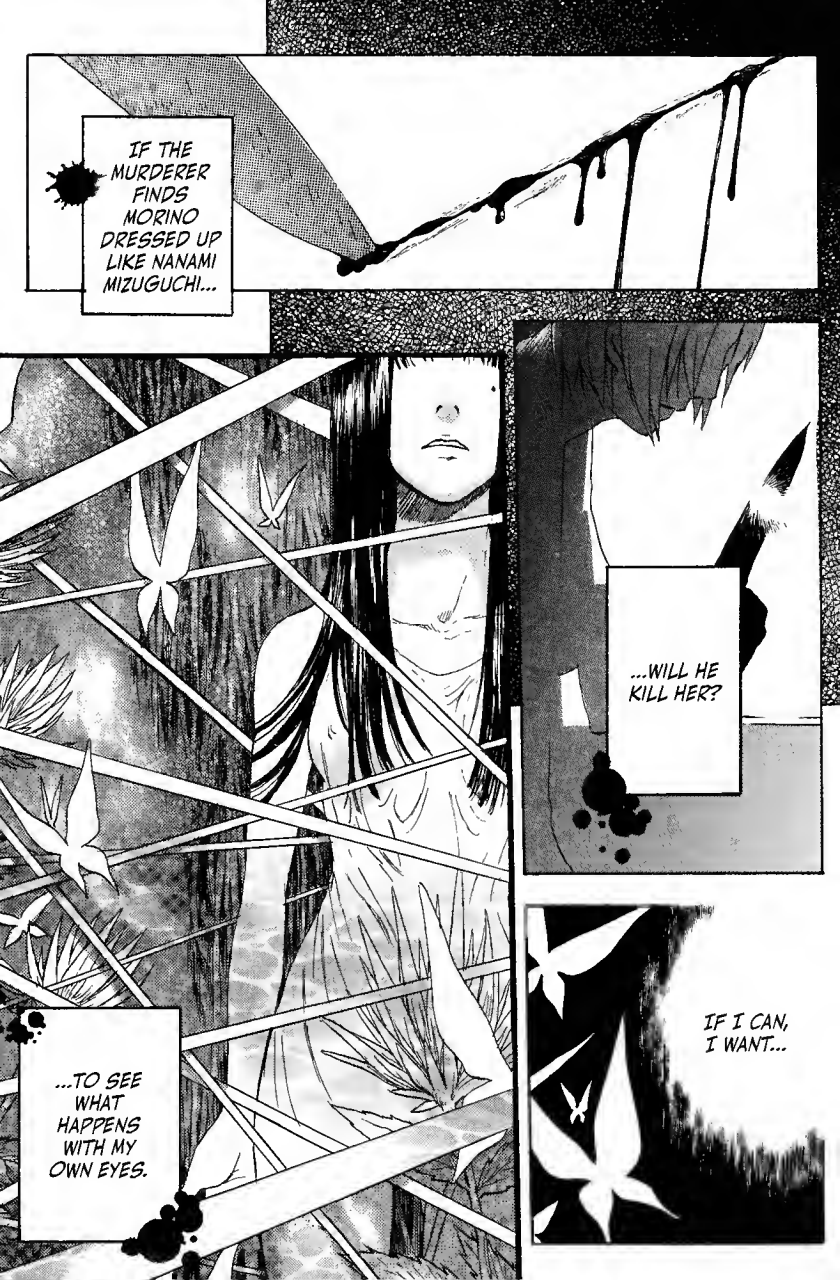

YORU?
AH, NO, SHE HASN'T BEEN BACK HOME SINCE SHE LEFT THE HOUSE YESTERDAY. I WONDER WHERE SHE WENT?


DID YOU HAPPEN TO SEE A BROWN NOTEBOOK IN HER ROOM?


SHE'S NOT BACK? I SEE.
……!


UM...IF I'M NOT INTRUDING, MAY I...
!
...A NOTEBOOK? I THINK THERE'S SOMETHING LIKE THAT ON HER DESK.
WELL, WELL, WELL, HELLO THERE!
WAS THIS THE NOTEBOOK YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT?
YES, THAT'S IT.
THANK YOU VERY MUCH.
BY THE WAY, DID YOU READ ANYTHING INSIDE...?

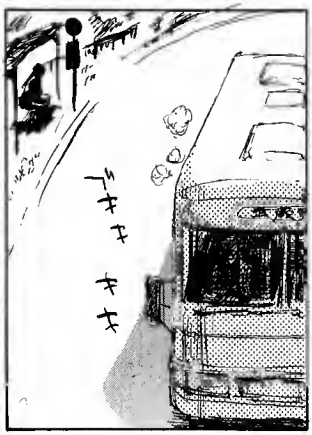

I NOTICED THAT SHE STARTED GOING TO SCHOOL EVERY DAY THIS YEAR.
SO THIS IS THE REASON.
……
NO, IT'S TOO MUCH TROUBLE READING TINY WORDS!
Can't fight age!
I'm getting old...
WHEN YORU WAS LEAVING...
DID YOU ASK HER WHERE SHE WAS GOING?
NO...
ARE YOU GOING TO GO LOOK FOR MY DAUGHTER?
YES...
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO HER.
?

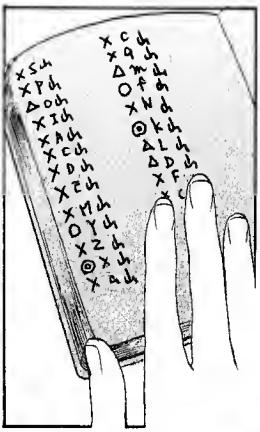

IF THE MURDERER FINDS MORINO DRESSED UP LIKE NANAMI MIZUGUCHI...
...WILL HE KILL HER?
IF I CAN, I WANT...
...TO SEE WHAT HAPPENS WITH MY OWN EYES.

BUT WOULD THE MURDERER ACT AGAIN AFTER LOSING HIS NOTEBOOK?

ALSO, SOMEONE ELSE BESIDES THE MURDERER COULD HAVE TAKEN MORINO...







AFTER A WHILE I REALIZED HOW FOOLISH I WAS.

RUNNING AROUND WITHOUT ANY REAL EVIDENCE...




I DON'T HAVE TO SWEAT IT.
I CAN CONTINUE LOOKING TOMORROW.




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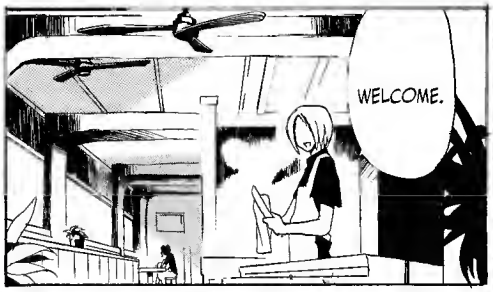

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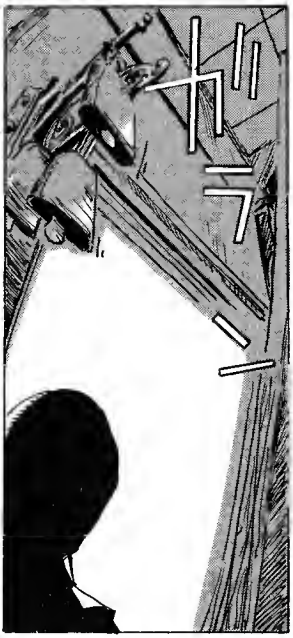









WELCOME.




MAY I TAKE YOUR ORDER?



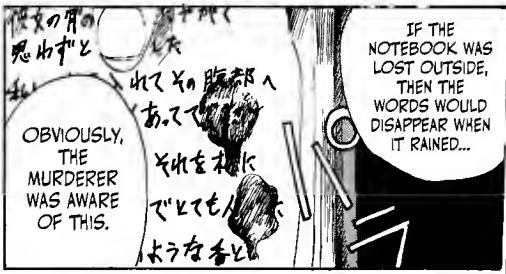

UM, NO, ACTUALLY, I'M A FRIEND OF A GIRL NAMED MORINO. DO YOU KNOW HER?
OH, THAT'S RIGHT.
YES... SHE'S A REGULAR.
I'M FAMILIAR WITH MOST OF THE CUSTOMERS THAT COME HERE.
SHE WAS TELLING ME SOMETHING LIKE THAT, TOO.
SO...
...IS SHE STILL ALIVE?


THE OTHER DAY...
...MORINO FOUND THIS HERE.
!
WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
DOES IT LOOK FAMILIAR?

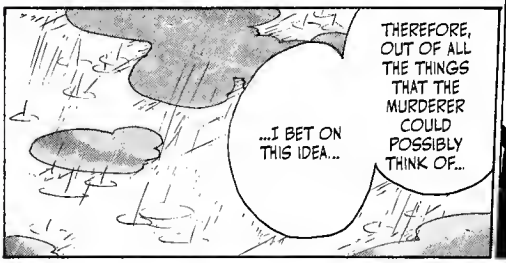

I TOOK A FIFTY-FIFTY CHANCE.
ニヤッ
IMPRESSIVE, HOW YOU TRACED IT BACK TO ME...
I FIGURED THAT YOU WROTE DOWN THE DETAILS TO CONTROL YOURSELF.
AFTER ALL, YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY PULL OFF AN IDEAL MURDER EVERY TIME.
……
AND IF THAT'S THE CASE, YOU WOULD IMMEDIATELY NOTICE IF YOU EVER DROPPED IT.
IF I WERE YOU, I'D ALWAYS HAVE IT ON ME...
...SO I COULD READ IT OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

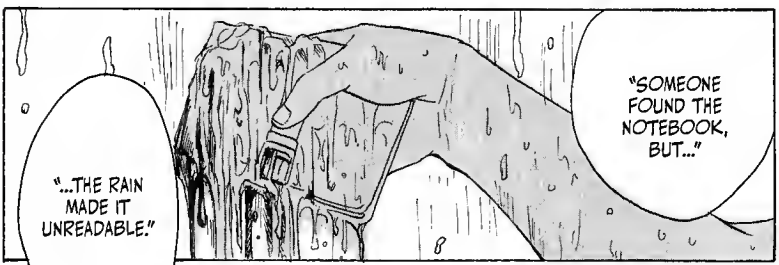

THE MURDERER CAN'T STRIKE AGAIN BECAUSE...
...SOMEONE MIGHT HAVE PICKED UP THE NOTEBOOK AND GIVEN IT TO THE POLICE.
BUT...
WHEN YOU WENT BACK TO LOOK FOR IT, THERE WAS NOTHING THERE.
HOWEVER ...
YORU MORINO IS MISSING.
SO, WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S ME?
UH HUH.


IT WAS A BET.


OBVIOUSLY, THE MURDERER WAS AWARE OF THIS.
IF THE NOTEBOOK WAS LOST OUTSIDE, THEN THE WORDS WOULD DISAPPEAR WHEN IT RAINED...

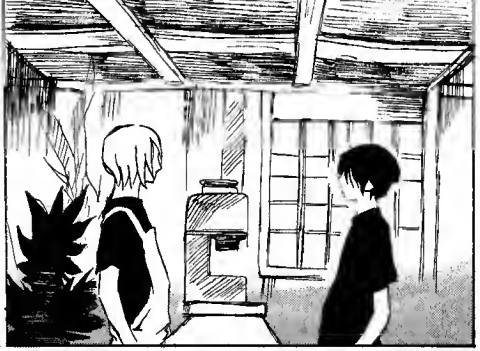

THIS...
?
...THE WORDS ARE ALL IN WATER-SOLUBLE INK.

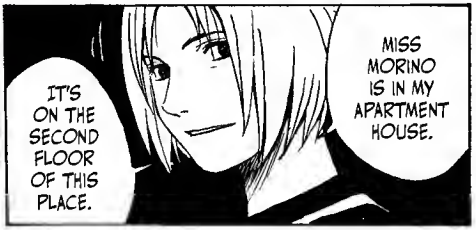

...I BET ON THIS IDEA...
THEREFORE, OUT OF ALL THE THINGS THAT THE MURDERER COULD POSSIBLY THINK OF...


"...THE RAIN MADE IT UNREADABLE."
"SOMEONE FOUND THE NOTEBOOK, BUT..."


THE ONLY PERSON, THEN...
...THAT COULD HAVE DROPPED IT IN THE RAIN...
...WAS YOU, WHEN YOU STEPPED OUT DURING THE DOWNPOUR.
INDEED ...
...I THOUGHT I'D LOST IT THEN.

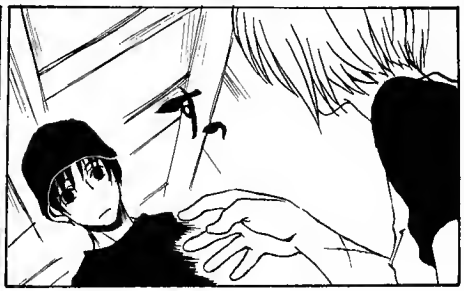


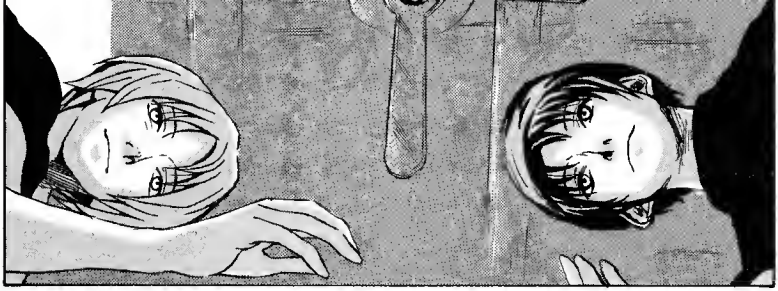


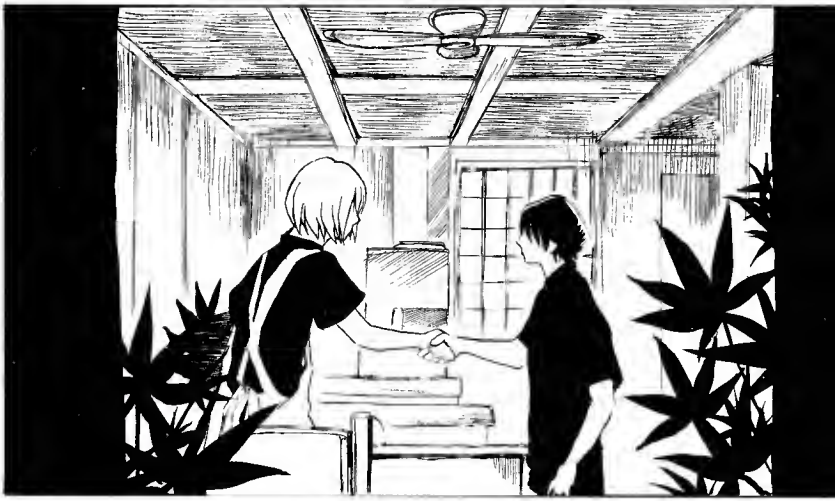

MISS MORINO IS IN MY APARTMENT HOUSE.
IT'S ON THE SECOND FLOOR OF THIS PLACE.

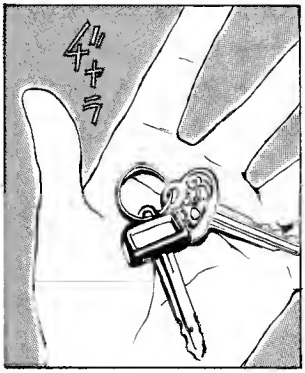

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IT'S TIME TO SAY GOODBYE.



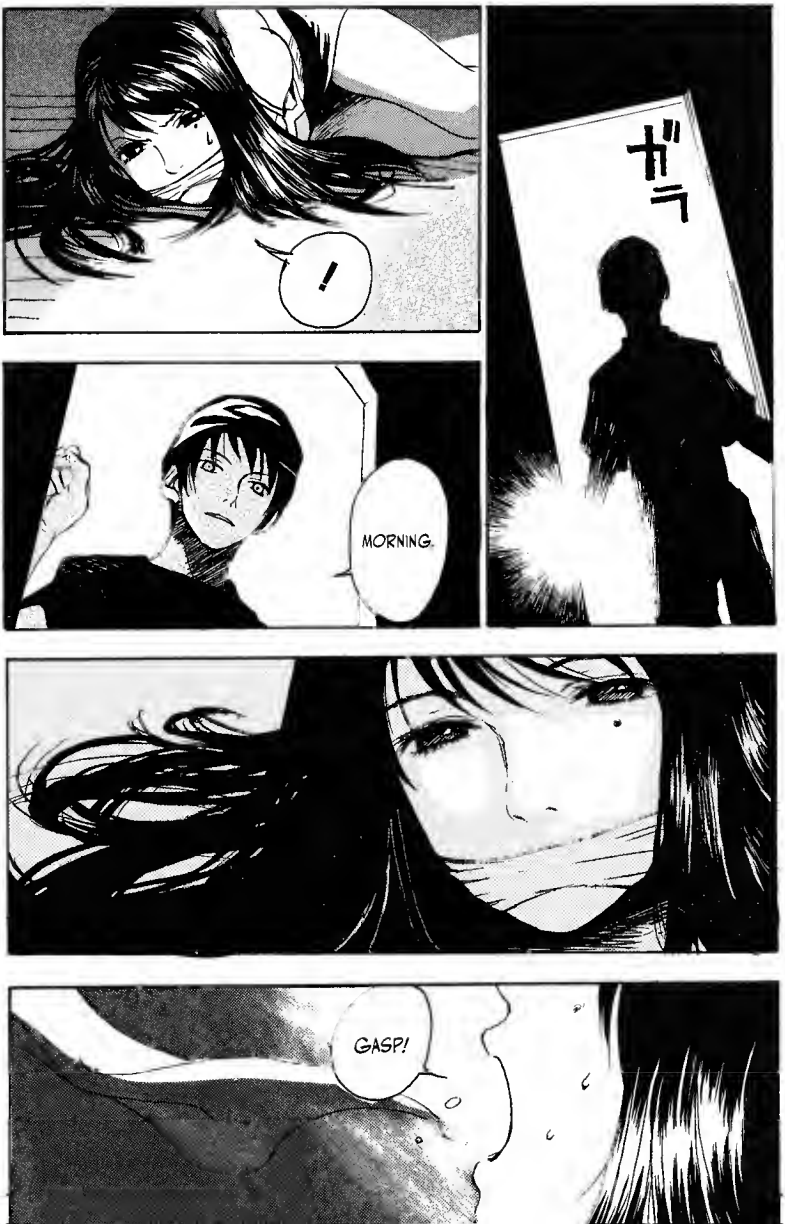





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WHO KNOWS ...?
HEY, EXCUSE ME!
CHECK PLEASE!!
HUH?
WHERE'S THE OWNER?
HE'LL NEVER RETURN TO THIS CITY.
FOR SOME REASON, I AM CERTAIN OF THIS.


!
ガラ
MORNING.
GASP!


WHEN I WAS CAPTURED, I WAS ABLE TO TEXT YOU BUT I COULDN'T SPEAK.
HEY!!
DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THIS!! THE OWNER IS COMING BACK!!
HE WON'T COME.
?
WHY?
WHO KNOWS?

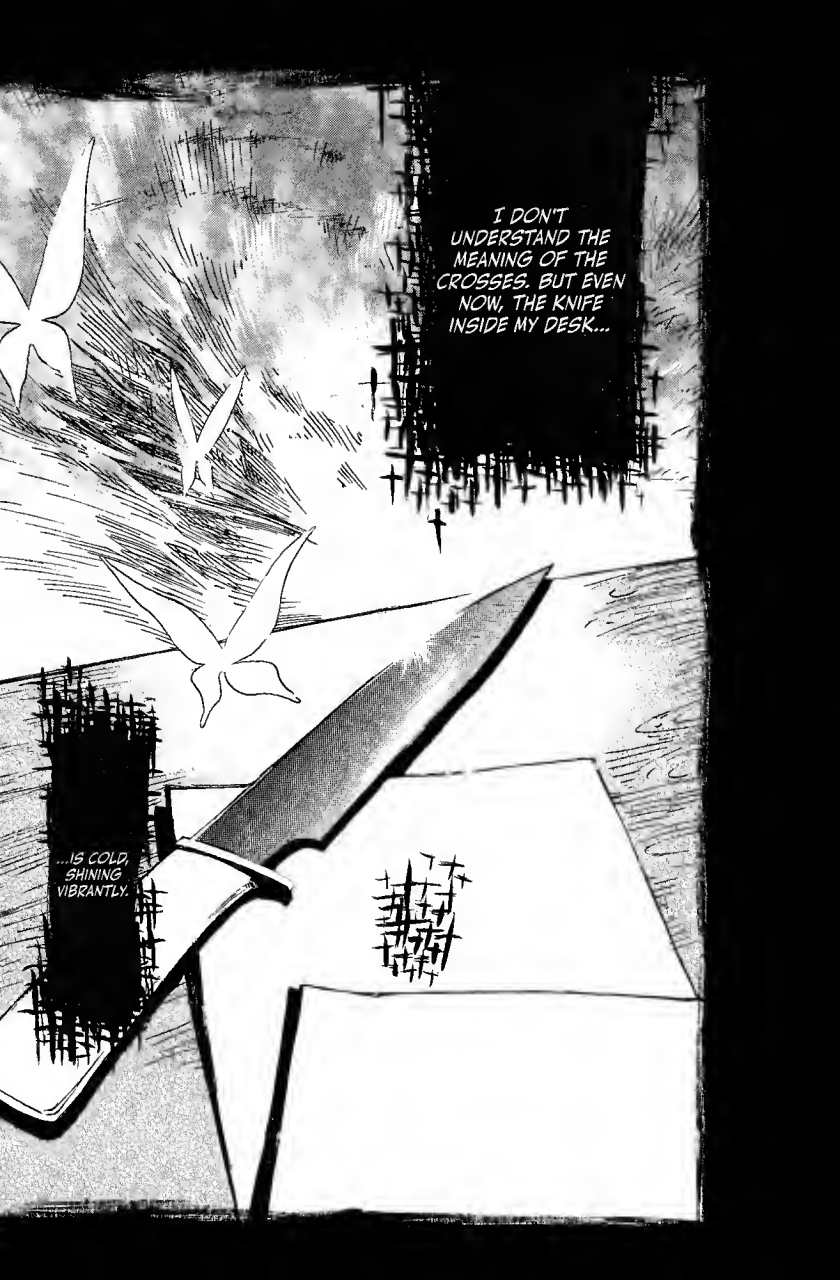

BY THE TIME I NOTICED, THIS HAPPENED.
...AND ASKED ME TO HELP HIM CARRY BOXES.
THE OWNER PRETENDED HE WAS INJURED...
I'M NEVER COMING HERE EVER AGAIN!!



I DON'T THINK SHE REALIZED THAT THE OWNER WAS THE NOTEBOOK MURDERER.

I DECIDED TO TAKE HOME SOUVENIRS: A SET OF KNIVES AND THE DRAWING OF MULTIPLE CROSSES.

SPECIAL THANKS ★ HIGUCHI Akihiko ★ KOZIMA ★ TSUGANO GAKU


I DON'T UNDERSTAND THE MEANING OF THE CROSSES. BUT EVEN NOW, THE KNIFE INSIDE MY DESK...
...IS COLD, SHINING VIBRANTLY.


III
Grave
HEY BRO...
DO YOU THINK MY DAD IS STILL MAD?
I WANT TO GET OUT OF HERE SOON.
HEY.
KOU-KUN...


YOU CAN'T GO BACK HOME ANYMORE.
WHY?
?


I'M GOING TO APOLOGIZE TO DAD.
SO LET ME OUT OF HERE, BRO.
KOU-KUN...
I'M SORRY ...
I'M SORRY...


I REALIZED THREE YEARS HAD ALREADY PASSED...
THAT DAY...
I PUT MY NEIGHBOR KOUSUKE, WHO I CHERISHED LIKE MY OWN BROTHER, INTO A WOODEN BOX AND BURIED HIM ALIVE, DEEP WITHIN THE GROUND.
I WANTED TO TRY BURYING SOMEONE I LOVED.


EVENTUALLY THE PUBLIC FORGOT ALL ABOUT THE LOST BOY...
MR. SAEKI!
IT'S THE CIRCULATION BULLETIN!!
AND NOW...
OKAY.
...THE IDEA OF BURYING A HUMAN BEING IN THE GROUND CROSSED MY MIND AGAIN.


Ⅲ
±
Grave


HEY...
OUT OF ALL OF THE WAYS TO KILL A PERSON...
...WHICH IS THE MOST INHUMANE?
IF THAT'S NOT A RIDDLE...
...I DON'T THINK YOU CAN CHOOSE ONE.


LIKE STARVATION OR DROWNING?
THAT'S TRUE.
BUT I'M SURE IT WOULD INVOLVE GREAT PAIN WHILE PREVENTING AN INSTANTANEOUS DEATH.
YEAH, THOSE ARE POSSIBILITIES, BUT I'M THINKING OF SOMETHING MORE GRUESOME AND DAUNTING.
A WAY THAT'D MAKE YOU HIDE AND COVER YOUR FACE. IN OTHER WORDS...
...A WAY THAT TAKES AWAY ALL YOUR FREEDOM, KILLING YOU WITH THE HUNGER TO LIVE.





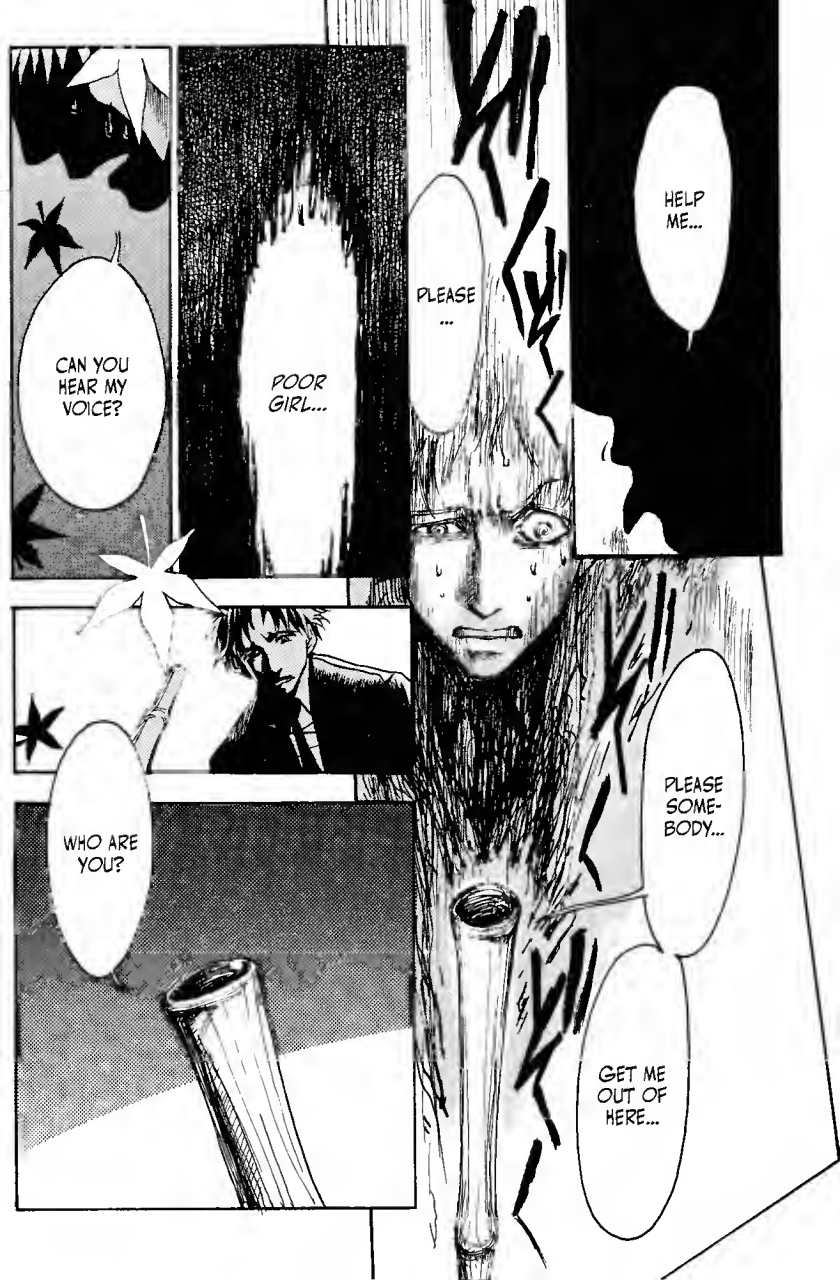






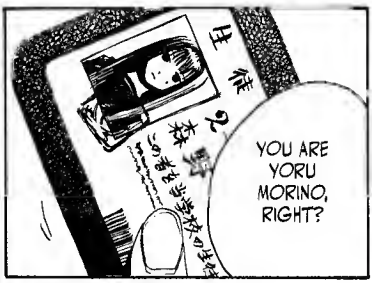

WHAT WERE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT?
?
A SCREAM?
OH...A GIRL GOT ATTACKED NEAR CAMEL PARK YESTERDAY.
YEAH! BUT NO ONE KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED BECAUSE IT WAS DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT!
ISN'T MORINO'S HOUSE NEAR CAMEL PARK?
OH YEAH, MORINO ISN'T HERE TODAY! MAYBE SHE GOT KIDNAPPED...

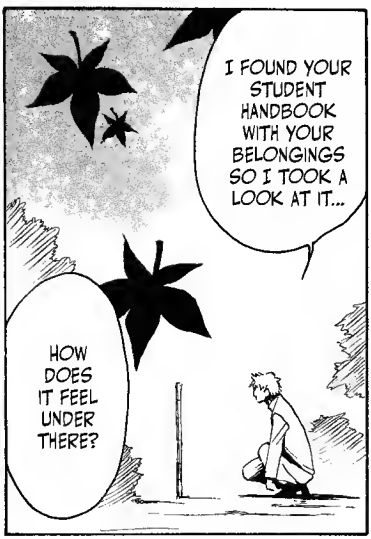

NO...SHE'S FINE.
SHE'S JUST DITCHING AS USUAL.


HELP ME...
PLEASE ...
POOR GIRL...
CAN YOU HEAR MY VOICE?
PLEASE SOME-BODY...
GET ME OUT OF HERE...
WHO ARE YOU?

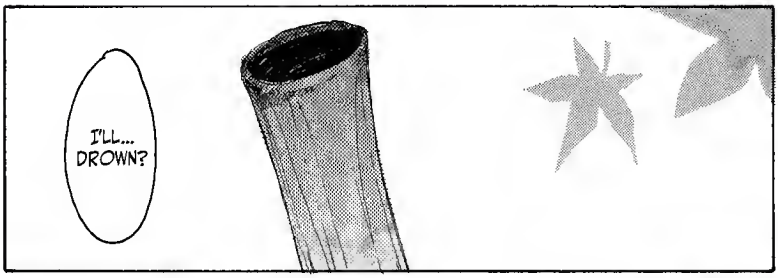

MY NAME IS SAEKI.


.....
SO YOU'RE THE ONE WHO ATTACKED ME AND TRAPPED ME HERE?
LET ME OUT!


YOU ARE YORU MORINO, RIGHT?


I FOUND YOUR STUDENT HANDBOOK WITH YOUR BELONGINGS SO I TOOK A LOOK AT IT...
HOW DOES IT FEEL UNDER THERE?


BURIED?!
I'M STILL ALIVE!!
I...I CAN'T DO THAT.
YOU'VE BEEN BURIED.
YES...
BECAUSE IT'S NO FUN BURYING A DEAD BODY.
THERE'S A TUBE-LIKE OBJECT STICKING OUT NEAR YOUR FACE, ISN'T THERE?
IF I POUR WATER INTO THAT VENT HOLE, YOU WILL END UP DROWNING.


I'LL... DROWN?


I'M GOING TO HAVE A MEAL NOW, SO PLEASE STAY STILL WHILE I'M GONE.


IT'S SO ENDEARING TO ME THAT YOU'RE LYING IN THE GROUND RIGHT NOW.
IT REALLY IS.


ARE YOU TERRIFIED?


I SEE A BLACK BIRD OF DOOM ON YOUR BACK.




ONE DAY, MY FRIEND WILL EXPOSE YOUR CRIME.
?
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?
I'VE GOT A BALLPOINT PEN IN MY UNIFORM POCKET. YOU DIDN'T CHECK, DID YOU? I'LL STAB MYSELF IN THE ARTERY.
AND BESIDES, I'LL COMMIT SUICIDE BEFORE YOU CAN KILL ME.
A LONELY DEATH DOES NOT AWAIT ME...
NO MATTER WHAT, IT DOESN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT YOU WILL DIE ALONE IN THERE.
IT'S...IT'S THE SAME THING IF YOU KILL YOURSELF.



HER WORDS, LIKE A SINGLE DROP OF BLACK INK IN WATER...

...SPREAD OVER MY HEART LIKE A BLACK MOTTLED PATTERN.








……!
HOW CAN SHE SAY SUCH A THING IN HER SITUATION?!
ゴン
HUH?!
THE NOTEBOOK I PUT NEXT TO MY CIGARETTES IS GONE!!
T-THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!!
IT HAS MY PERSONAL INFORMATION...!!
ドカ
……!!
ピタ
COULD IT BE THAT I DROPPED IT THEN?!

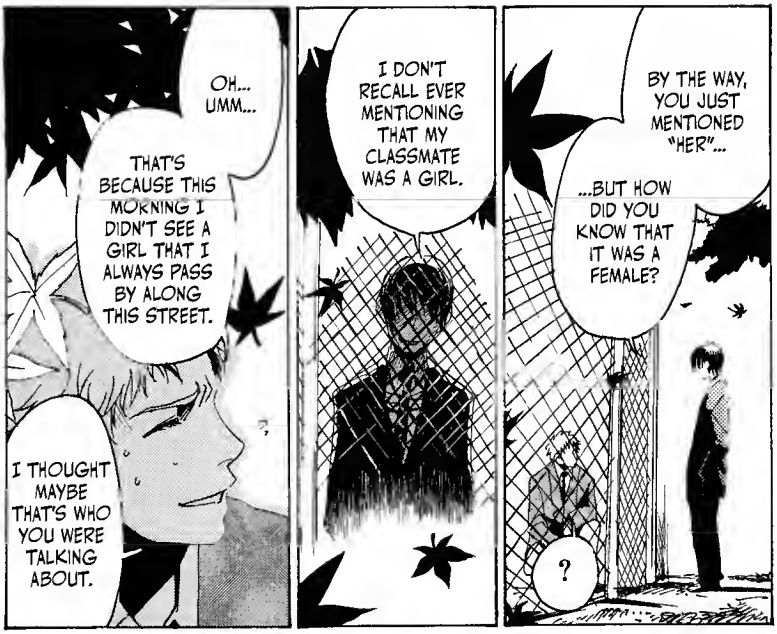

SWOOSH
!


AHA HA HA!
HEH...
HA HA HA...
HEH HEH...
SHIT!!
HA HA HA!
SHIT!!
HA HA HA HA!


EARLY AFTER-NOON, NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE AROUND...
FALLEN LEAVES...
GOOD. THAT MUST MEAN NO ONE'S FOUND IT YET.
DO YOU NEED SOME HELP?


FROM WHAT I CAN TELL, YOU MUST BE LOOKING FOR SOMETHING.
I'M ALSO LOOKING FOR SOMETHING... FOR SOMEONE, TO BE EXACT.
キィ…
ONE OF MY CLASSMATES HAS BEEN MISSING SINCE LAST NIGHT.
キィ
ARE YOU FROM AROUND HERE? DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT A "SCREAM" FROM LAST NIGHT?


I SEE. APPARENTLY, MY CLASSMATE WALKED THIS PATH EVERY DAY...
...SO I THOUGHT MAYBE THAT WAS THE PERSON WHO SCREAMED LAST NIGHT....
...NO.
WERE YOU...
...GOOD FRIENDS WITH HER?
YEAH...
...SORT OF.


OH... UMM...
THAT'S BECAUSE THIS MORNING I DIDN'T SEE A GIRL THAT I ALWAYS PASS BY ALONG THIS STREET.
I THOUGHT MAYBE THAT'S WHO YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT.
I DON'T RECALL EVER MENTIONING THAT MY CLASSMATE WAS A GIRL.
BY THE WAY, YOU JUST MENTIONED "HER"...
...BUT HOW DID YOU KNOW THAT IT WAS A FEMALE?
?


SO, YOU CAME HERE BECAUSE YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT HER?
NO...
A SKINNY GIRL WITH LONG HAIR?
YES, THE GIRL WITH A MOLE BELOW HER LEFT EYE.

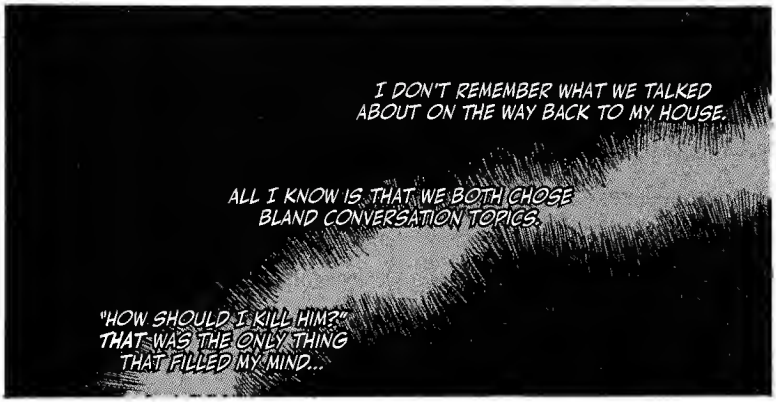

I JUST CAME HERE TO SIGHTSEE.
SIGHT-SEE?
YEAH...I LIKE TO LOOK AT CRIME SCENES.
AT THE POLICE STATION, THERE'S A MAP OF THE LOCAL AREA WITH RED DOTS...
...EACH INDICATING THE LOCATION OF FATAL ACCIDENTS.


I VISIT THOSE PLACES AND CHECK THE SURFACE OF THE ASPHALT WITH THE SOLES OF MY SHOES...
IT'S MY HOBBY TO STAND AT THE SITE WHERE PEOPLE DIED.
PLUS...
...IF I'M LUCKY...


...I MIGHT BE ABLE TO MEET THE CRIMINAL...


...WHO RETURNS TO THE SCENE OF THE CRIME FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER.


I HAVE TO ESCAPE...
THIS GUY...
...PROBABLY PICKED UP MY NOTEBOOK HERE!
IF THAT'S THE CASE...
YOU LOOK PALE.
WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO WALK YOU BACK HOME?
MAY I...
.....
...ASK YOU TO?

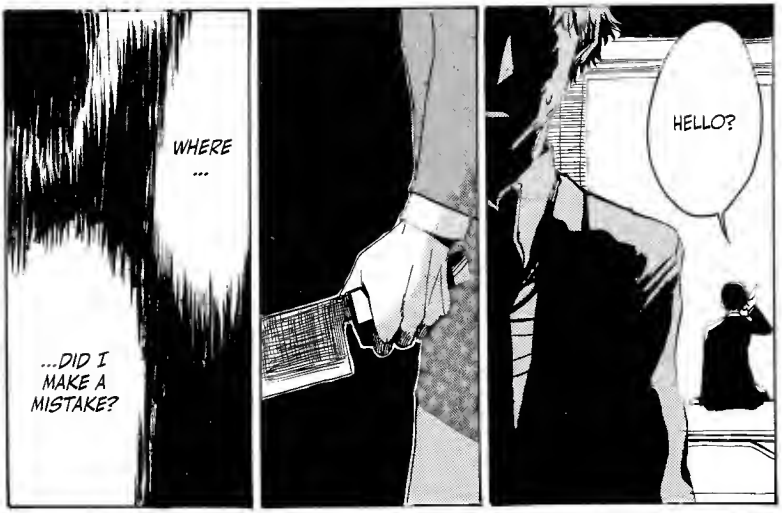

I DON'T REMEMBER WHAT WE TALKED ABOUT ON THE WAY BACK TO MY HOUSE.
ALL I KNOW IS THAT WE BOTH CHOSE BLAND CONVERSATION TOPICS.
"HOW SHOULD I KILL HIM?" THAT WAS THE ONLY THING THAT FILLED MY MIND...


.....
I WONDER WHERE MORINO'S DISAPPEARED TO...


WHAT A MAGNIFICENT GARDEN.


HA HA... TH-THERE'S SO MANY TREES THAT IT LOOKS LIKE A FOREST, DOESN'T IT?
I HAVE SOME TEA HERE...

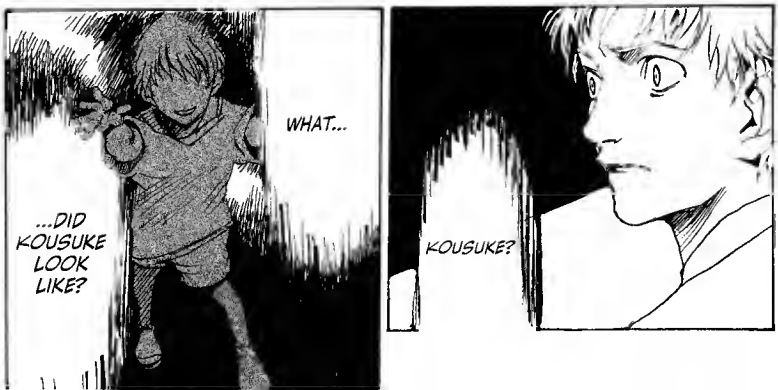

I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT SHE EMITS SOME SORT OF PHEROMONE...
...THAT SEEMS TO ATTRACT PSYCHOPATHS.
SHE...
ドキッ
BERRRING



WHEN DID I BECOME SOMEONE WHO THINKS NOTHING OF KILLING PEOPLE?

I USED TO BE A KIND, LAW-ABIDING CITIZEN.

I REALLY DID LOVE KOUSUKE TOO...BUT STILL...




ビクッ
MR. SAEKI?


YES?
I JUST GOT SOME GOOD NEWS...
...SO I'M GOING TO HEAD BACK.


...IM-IMPOSSIBLE...




MORINO WAS FINE
AND SHE'S COMING BY HERE RIGHT NOW.


I DEFINITELY BURIED THAT GIRL...
WHAT'S GOING ON?


NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES I CALLED OUT TO HER THAT NIGHT...
...NOT ONCE...
...DID I HEAR HER VOICE FROM THE GROUND.
.....
ウ!!

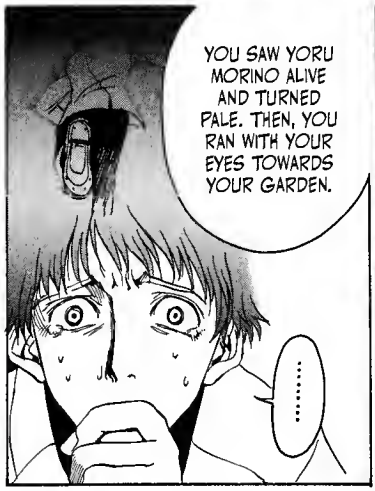

THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD GET OUT FROM UNDER THE GROUND.
BUT THE GIRL THAT I SAW TODAY...
IF IT'S NOT HER...
...THEN WHAT IN THE WORLD DID I BURY?

ERK...!
AS YOU HAVE PROBABLY REALIZED, SHE IS NOT YORU MORINO.
!
W-WHY...
...ARE YOU HERE?


HE IS ALSO MY CLASSMATE.
HE'S THE BOYFRIEND OF THE GIRL YOU BURIED.


!


W-WHY?


YOU SAW YORU MORINO ALIVE AND TURNED PALE. THEN, YOU RAN WITH YOUR EYES TOWARDS YOUR GARDEN.
.....


MR. SAEKI, WHEN I WAS LEAVING AT NOON, I REALIZED...
...THAT YOU WERE HIDING THE GIRL SOMEWHERE IN YOUR HOUSE.


YOU KNEW THAT THE LOST GIRL HAD A MOLE BELOW HER LEFT EYE, CORRECT?
THAT'S WHY I BEGAN TO SUSPECT YOU.
FROM THE BEGINNING...
...Y-YOU KNEW THAT IT WAS ME?
SHE WAS CARRYING THAT AROUND BECAUSE SHE WAS TRYING TO GIVE IT BACK TO HER NEIGHBOR, MORINO, WHO HAD LOST HER HANDBOOK.
BUT...
...IN THE STUDENT HAND-BOOK THAT SHE HAD--!
SO YOU'RE THE ONE THAT FOUND MY NOTEBOOK, RIGHT?


DIDN'T YOU PICK UP MY NOTEBOOK NEAR THE PARK?
?
NOTE-BOOK?
HER...
PLEASE! CHECK HER BODY...
!
!
MR. SAEKI. YOU...







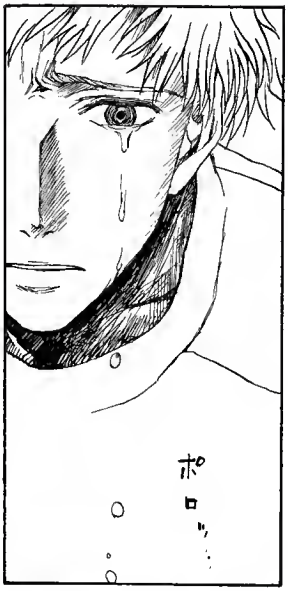
I FELT LIKE I WAS TRAPPED IN A COFFIN AT THE EDGE OF DARKNESS WHERE NOTHING WAS VISIBLE.

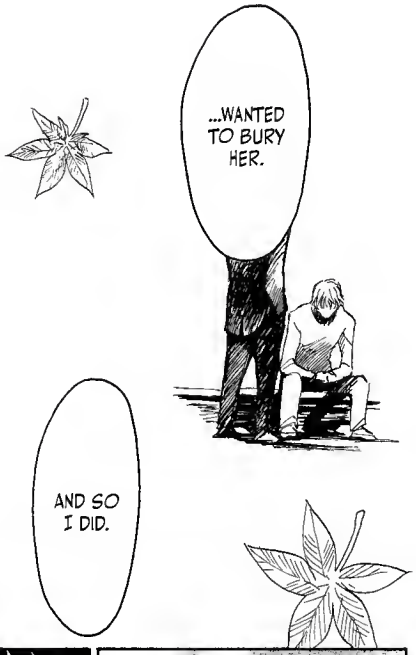
AT THAT MOMENT, I HAD NO IDEA HOW MUCH TIME HAD PASSED BY.

WHY WAS I BORN WITH SUCH A TAINTED SOUL?

SPECIAL THANKS ★ YAMADA★ doriyu★ DAIDO★ H.ISIZUKA★ AN-★ ABE★ CHIHAYA★ IWACCHI★SATOSI★★★★★KATURA★ TSUGANO


ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES...
YOU PUT THAT GIRL IN THE WOODEN BOX AND BURIED HER ALIVE.
HOW COULD YOU THINK OF DOING SOMETHING LIKE THAT?
I DON'T KNOW. I JUST...
SO THAT BAMBOO TUBE WAS YOUR INGENIOUS IDEA TO ALLOW BREATHING.
.....




...WANTED TO BURY HER.
AND SO I DID.


...I'M GLAD I WAS ABLE TO REACH THIS CONCLUSION ON MY OWN.
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT DOING SO WILL ABSOLVE MY CRIME, BUT...
I'M THINKING OF TURNING MYSELF IN.
.....


IF YOU WANT TO TURN YOURSELF IN, I'M NOT GOING TO STOP YOU.
BUT...
...COULD YOU WAIT FOR HALF A YEAR... IF NOT A MONTH?
?
YOU DON'T HAVE TO FEEL GUILT FOR WHAT HE DID. THAT'S THE PATH HE CHOSE.
YOU GOT THAT? EXACTLY ONE MONTH, OKAY?


...YOU...
OH YEAH, WHERE DID THAT OTHER BOY GO...
HIM?
WHO FILLED THAT HOLE IN AGAIN?
I WILL ALWAYS ...
...I LOVE YOU.

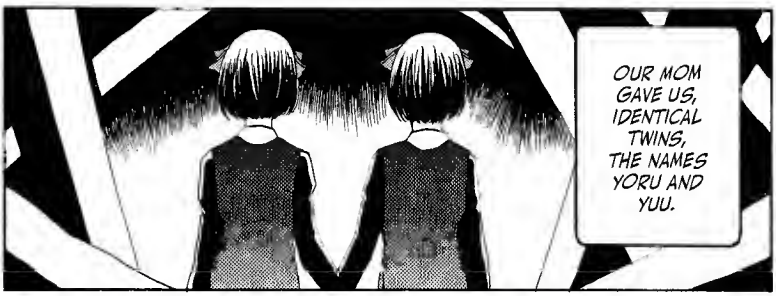

...BE BY YOUR SIDE.


IV
THE FIRST TIME I SAW A HUMAN CORPSE...
RUFF!
Inside
RUFF!
RUFF!
RUFF!
...WAS IN SECOND GRADE, DURING THE MIDDLE OF SUMMER.
ブラブラ
ブラン


HUFF...
HUFF...
HUFF...


A LONG TIME AGO, I WAS THE OTHER HALF OF MY TWIN SISTER.



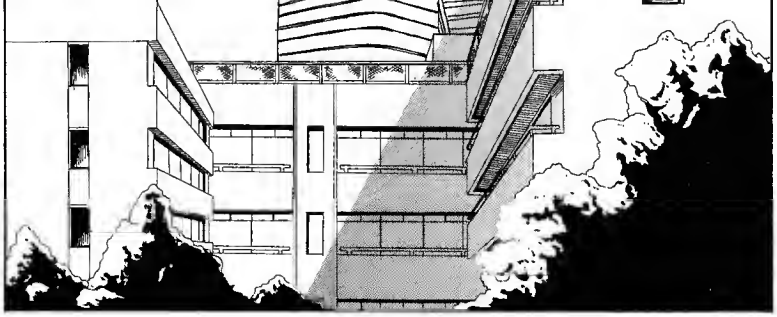

OUR MOM GAVE US, IDENTICAL TWINS, THE NAMES YORU AND YUU.


I WILL NEVER FORGET WHAT HAPPENED THE DAY MY TWIN SISTER YUU DIED.
FROM THAT DAY ON, I STOPPED SMILING.


RUFF!
RUFF!
RUFF!
RUFF!


YES...
RUFF!
RUFF!
RUFF!
RUFF!
...WHAT I SAW THERE...
RUFF!
RUFF!
...WAS, WITHOUT A DOUBT, MY OWN DEATH.


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Twins I

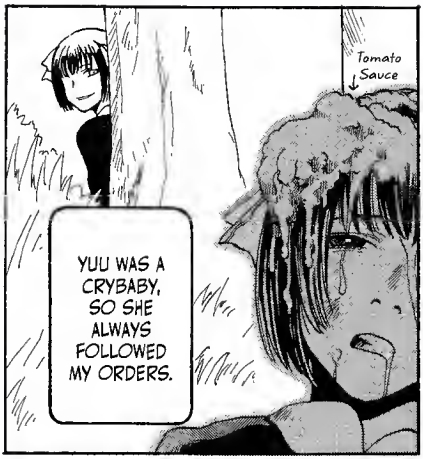



I CAN'T...
...REALLY SAY THAT THIS IS A GREAT DRAWING.
DON'T PLAY DUMB!
.....
WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO SAY?


SISTER?
THIS IS THE FIRST I'VE HEARD THAT YOU HAD A SISTER.
STOP MESSING WITH ME!
MY SISTER DREW THIS PICTURE A LONG TIME AGO! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO SENT IT TO ME, AREN'T YOU?!
IT'S OKAY THEN. SORRY, I HAVEN'T BEEN SLEEPING LATELY.
SOMETHING MUST'VE GOTTEN INTO ME...
NOPE...
I really have no clue...
YOU'RE REALLY NOT THE ONE WHO SENT THIS?


SORRY ABOUT THAT. SEE YOU LATER.
ガタン
WAIT...
IF YOU DON'T MIND, CAN YOU TELL ME THE STORY ABOUT YOUR SISTER?
SURE... FINE.
IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO.


SINCE WE LIVED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE WITH NOTHING BUT RICE PADDIES AND FIELDS AND ONLY A FEW FRIENDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD...
MY SISTER'S NAME WAS YUU. WE WERE TWINS AND ALWAYS USED TO PLAY TOGETHER.
...WHAT WE ENJOYED DOING MOST WAS DRAWING AND ACTING LIKE DEAD BODIES.
WE WERE IDENTICAL, SO WE LOOKED THE SAME ON THE OUTSIDE, BUT OUR PERSONALITIES WERE A LITTLE DIFFERENT.
I UNDERSTOOD THE CONCEPT OF "DEATH" MORE THAN MY YOUNGER SISTER AND...I WAS A SADISTIC CHILD.


Tomato Sauce
YUU WAS A CRYBABY, SO SHE ALWAYS FOLLOWED MY ORDERS.


I WAS THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED THAT WE PRETEND TO BE DEAD BODIES AND SCARE PEOPLE.
EEP!!
ブーン


BUT WHEN I ORDERED HER TO FEED DOG FOOD LACED WITH BLEACH TO OUR DOG...
...SHE CRIED AND REFUSED.
(?)


Food!!
I LOVED WATCHING YUU'S TROUBLED FACE.


BUT I WOULDN'T LET UP.


WE STILL PLAYED TOGETHER EVEN THOUGH THINGS LIKE THAT WOULD HAPPEN.
IT WAS ALSO AROUND THAT TIME WHEN WE PLAYED THE "SUICIDE BY HANGING" GAME.
IT WAS EASY TO PLAY.
ALL WE NEEDED WAS A PAIR OF ROPES TO HOLD THE BODY UP.
IT WAS YUU'S FAVORITE GAME.
ONE ROPE ON THE NECK, AND THE OTHER WRAPPED AROUND THE UNDERARMS AS A LIFELINE.

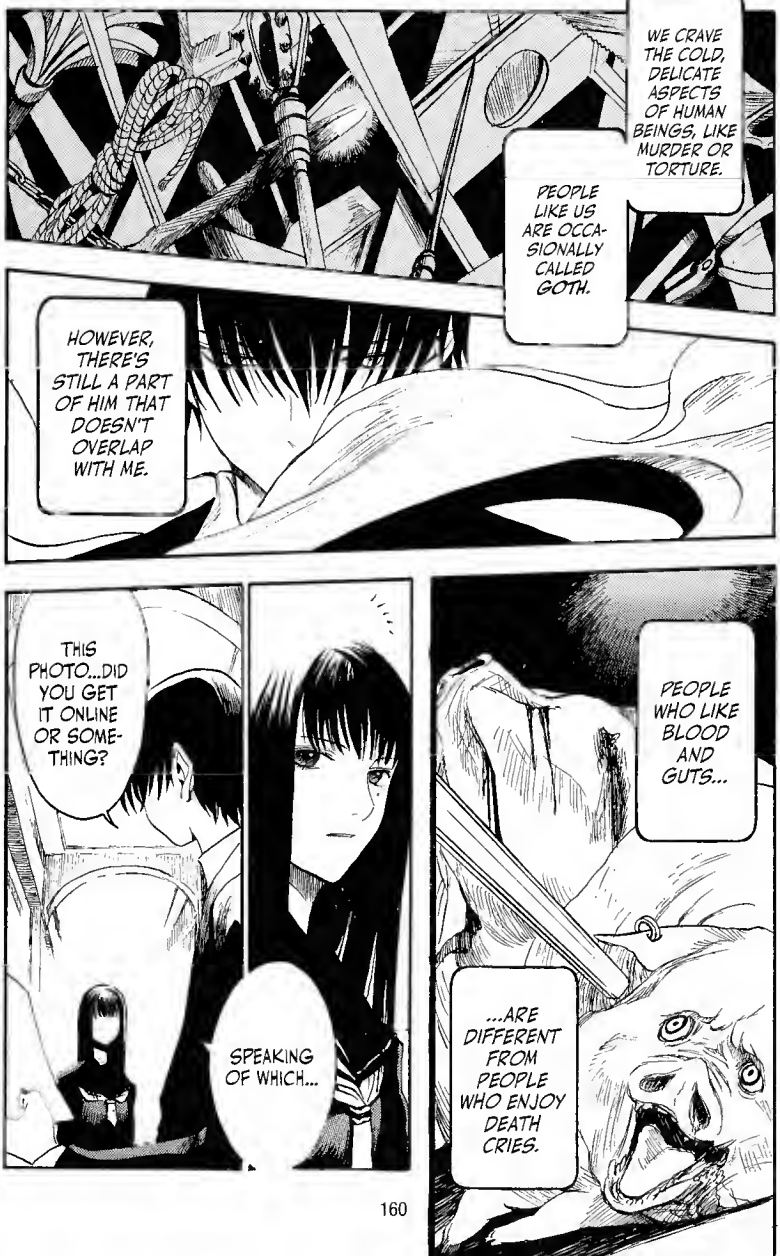

BUT ONE DAY...
I SAW YUU WALK INTO THE SHED BY HERSELF.
SHE DIDN'T CALL ME, SO I LEFT HER ALONE, THINKING THAT'S WHAT SHE WANTED.
ABOUT AN HOUR LATER, I WENT TO CALL HER IN FOR SOME SNACKS.
WHAT I SAW THERE...


IT WAS AN ACCIDENT...
BUT THE LIFELINE THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO SUPPORT HER HAD FRAYED...
SHE WAS JUST TRYING TO SCARE OUR FAMILY BY PRETENDING TO HANG HERSELF.
SHE DREW THIS PICTURE TOO.
AT FIRST, I THOUGHT YOU SENT IT TO ME, BUT...


AS FAR AS I KNOW...
...THE ONLY PERSON THAT WOULD BE INTERESTED IN MY PAST WOULD BE...
...YOU.
WHY DID YOU THINK I SENT IT?
AS USUAL.
ARTICLES ABOUT PAST MURDER CASES.
I WAS THINKING...
BY THE WAY, WHAT WERE YOU READING IN HERE?


I'LL GIVE YOU THIS AS AN APOLOGY FOR DOUBTING YOU.
IF THAT'S THE CASE...
?
ベラッ
THIS IS THE BRUTAL MURDER IN THE VACANT LOT OF THE OLD SECONDARY HOSPITAL.
……!


NO, I GUESSED.
THIS PERSON'S HAIRSTYLE AND PROFILE LOOKED SIMILAR TO THE VICTIM'S...
!
YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU GOT IT WITH JUST ONE LOOK.
...A TENDENCY TO CONSTANTLY SEEK THE DARKNESS IN PEOPLE, JUST LIKE ME.
AH...
I SEE...
HE HAS...


WE CRAVE THE COLD, DELICATE ASPECTS OF HUMAN BEINGS, LIKE MURDER OR TORTURE.
PEOPLE LIKE US ARE OCCASIONALLY CALLED GOTH.
HOWEVER, THERE'S STILL A PART OF HIM THAT DOESN'T OVERLAP WITH ME.
THIS PHOTO...DID YOU GET IT ONLINE OR SOMETHING?
SPEAKING OF WHICH...
PEOPLE WHO LIKE BLOOD AND GUTS...
...ARE DIFFERENT FROM PEOPLE WHO ENJOY DEATH CRIES.


HEY, THAT PHOTO...
I GOT IT FROM A GUY IN THE CLASS NEXT DOOR. HE SAID IT HASN'T BEEN RELEASED YET.
HE GAVE IT TO ME WHEN I WAS READING BOOKS ON MURDER CASES, JUST LIKE YOU.
...YOU'RE NOT THE ONE WHO KILLED HIM ARE YOU?
I SEE.
THE HAIRSTYLE OF THE VICTIM IN THIS PHOTO... IT'S CLEARLY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT'S ON TV AND IN NEWSPAPERS.
SO HOW DID YOU KNOW?
WHY?


SORRY IF I OFFENDED YOU.
IT'S JUST THAT SOMETIMES YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE SMILING WITH AN EMPTY HEART.
BUT...I'M DIFFERENT.
I'M THE EXACT OPPOSITE ACTUALLY.
IT'S OKAY.
I ALREADY KNEW WITHOUT YOU TELLING ME.


THAT'S FINE, THEN.


...OKAY.


YO! WHAT'S UP?!
EH? ISN'T THAT TAKAMI FROM CLASS C?






HEY, THEY LOOK LIKE THEY'RE HAVING SO MUCH FUN TALKING.
DID SHE FINALLY DUMP YOU?
IDIOT! IT'S NOT LIKE THAT!
WELL WELL! NOW YOU'RE SINGLE JUST LIKE US. LET'S GET FRIENDLY!!

Good grief...

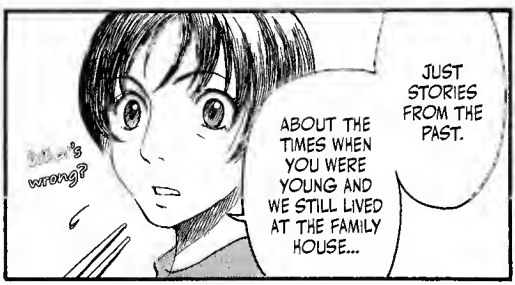

LATER MAN! DON'T BECOME A STALKER-- IT'S EMBARRASSING!!
WHATEVER!
.....
SHE'S PRETTY CLEVER...
YORU MORINO.

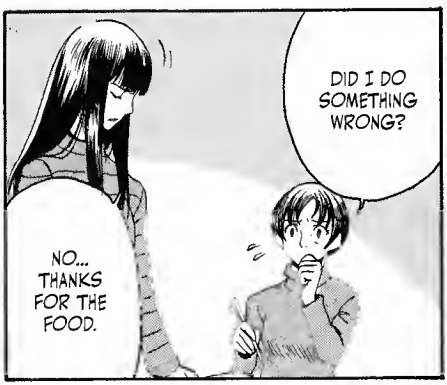

AN UNUSED KNIFE SLOWLY LOSES ITS COLOR...
I CAN HEAR THE SOUND...
...OF THE KNIFE WASTING AWAY.


A GUY FROM MY SCHOOL CAME TO OUR HOUSE THE OTHER DAY?!
WHAT?!

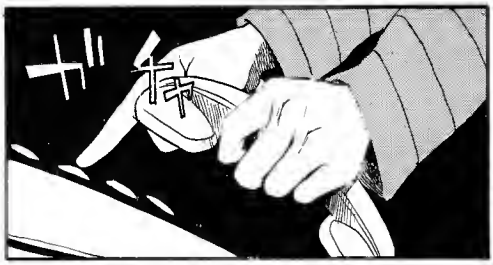

Huh huh huh...
OH? I DIDN'T TELL YOU? IT WAS A WEEK AGO.
AND WHAT DID YOU TALK TO HIM ABOUT, MOM?

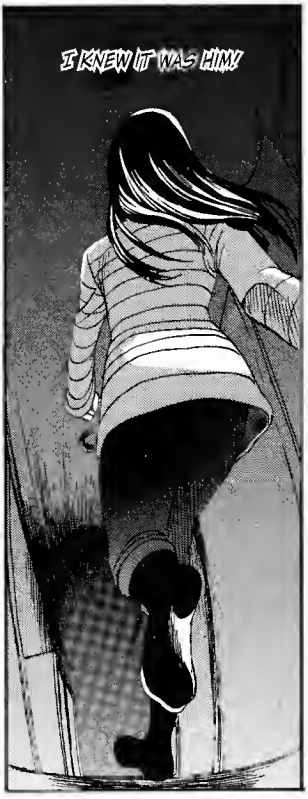



What's wrong?
ABOUT THE TIMES WHEN YOU WERE YOUNG AND WE STILL LIVED AT THE FAMILY HOUSE...
JUST STORIES FROM THE PAST.


DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?
NO... THANKS FOR THE FOOD.






I KNEW IT WAS HIM!

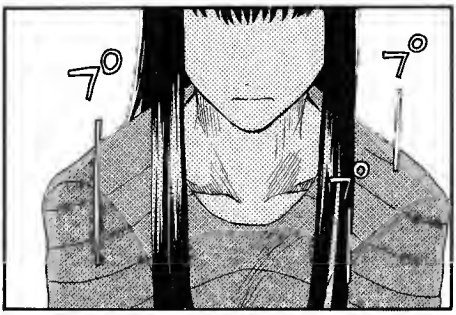

I HAVE TO GET STRAIGHT TO THE POINT. DID A BOY MY AGE VISIT YOU RECENTLY?
HELLO, GRANDMA? IT'S ME, YORU.
OH, YORU! IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME...

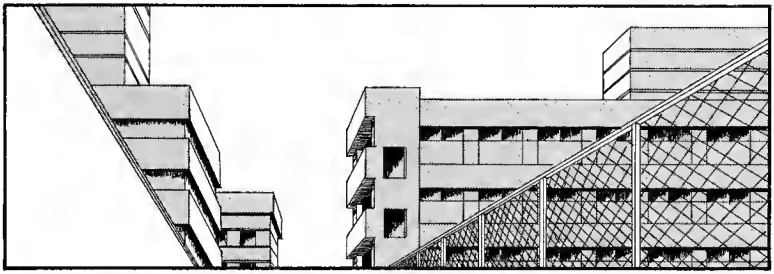

AHH...YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE BOY WHO TOOK THE PICTURE YOU DREW WHEN YOU WERE LITTLE?


HE'S LYING.


ANYWAYS, YORU-CHAN, YOU HAVE TO COME AND VISIT--
ガチャン


...I KNEW IT...
HUH? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? HELLO?

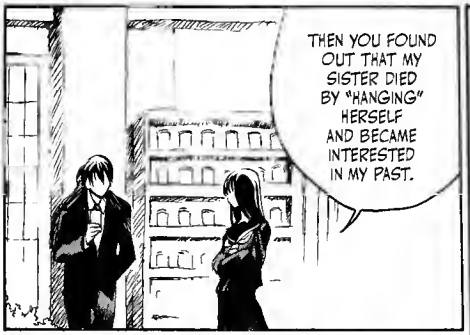





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WHY DID YOU LIE?


LIE?


THEN YOU FOUND OUT THAT MY SISTER DIED BY "HANGING" HERSELF AND BECAME INTERESTED IN MY PAST.


A WEEK AGO, YOU WENT TO MY HOUSE...
...AND HEARD ABOUT MY SISTER FROM MY MOTHER, RIGHT?

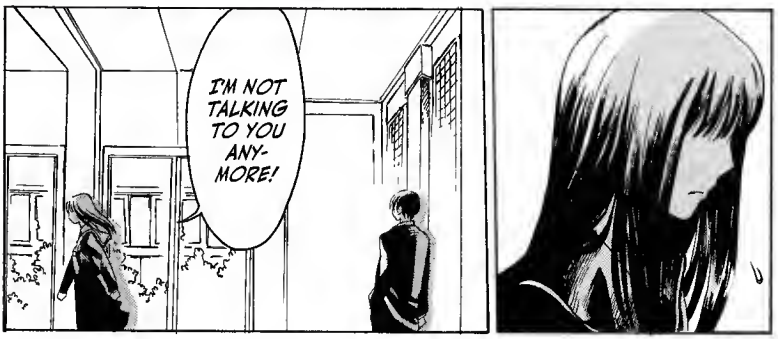

IT'S NO USE HIDING IT. YOU'RE JUST ABOUT THE ONLY WHO KNOWS MY HOUSE WELL.

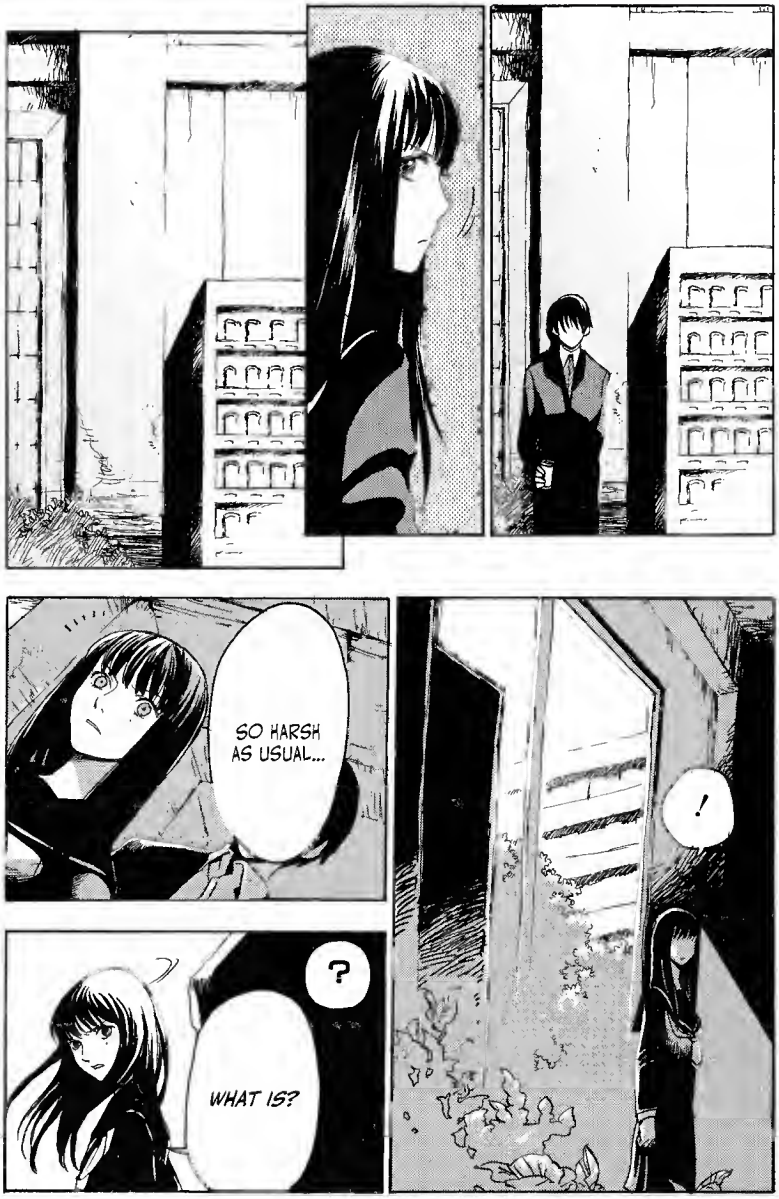

...I WENT TO YOUR HOUSE?


I THOUGHT YOU HAD BETTER PRINCIPLES THAN THAT.
YOU DISAP-POINT ME.
IT SEEMS LIKE YOU EVEN WENT TO MY OLD HOUSE TO SNOOP AROUND.
IN ANY CASE...
.....
...DON'T DO SOME-THING LIKE THAT EVER AGAIN!
WHY ARE YOU SO FIXATED ON YOUR PAST?


IS THERE SOME "CRIME" FROM YOUR PAST THAT YOU DON'T WANT ANYONE TO KNOW ABOUT?


YORU MORINO.


I'M NOT TALKING TO YOU ANY-MORE!


SO HARSH AS USUAL...
!
?
WHAT IS?

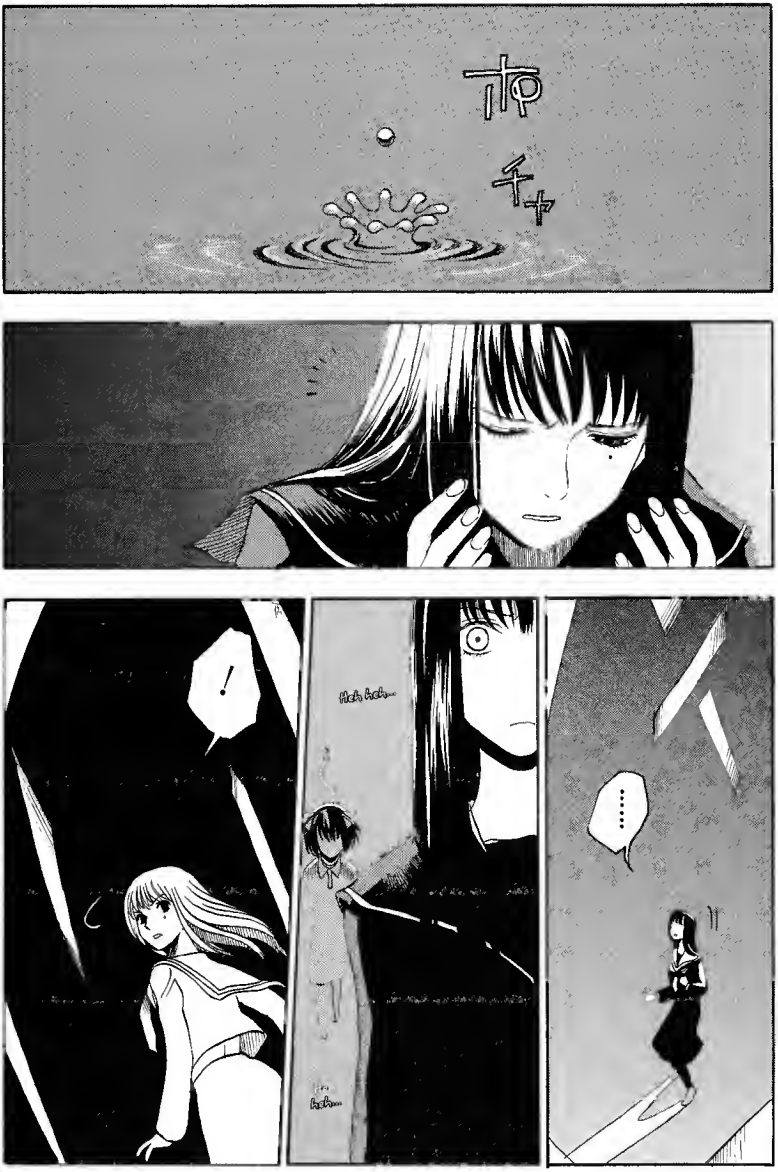





KEEP OUT.
SECONDARY
HOSPITAL


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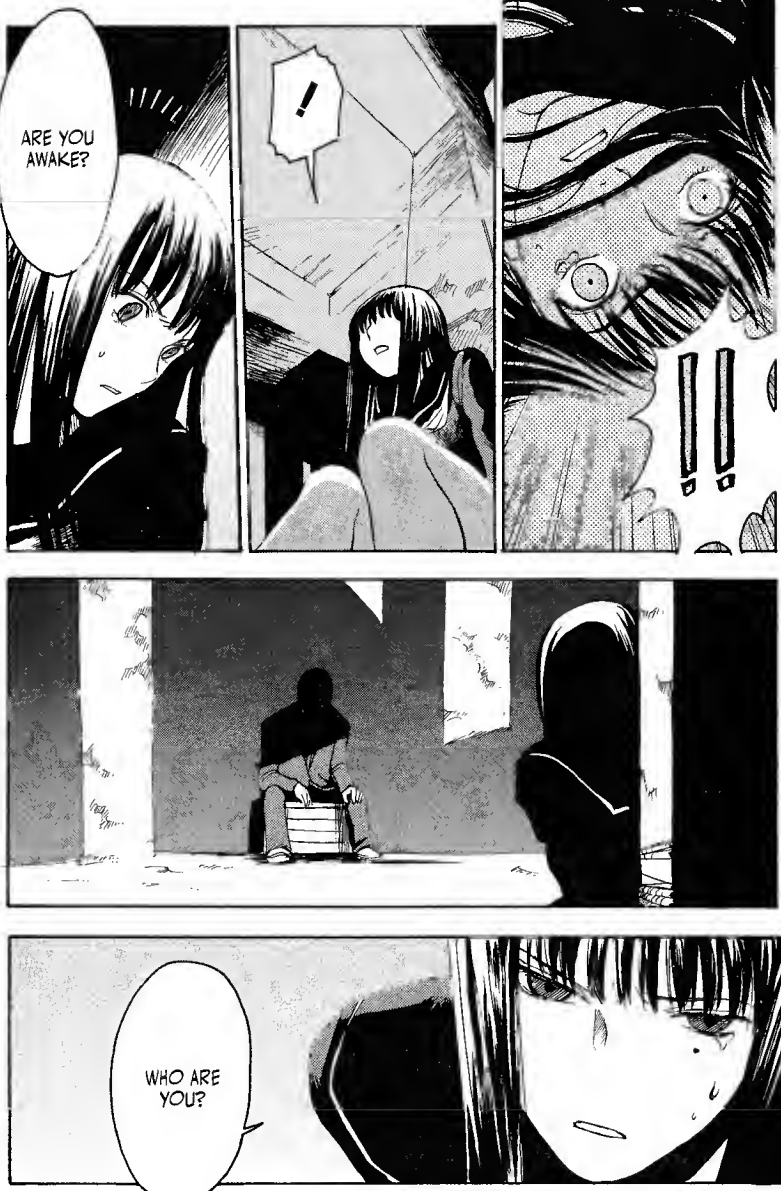

YOU ARE
MY PREY.


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チャ
!
Hah, hah...
Hah, hah...
……


WHY DIDN'T YOU SAVE ME?
YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP LYING LIKE THAT, AREN'T YOU?
LIAR...
TAP TAP

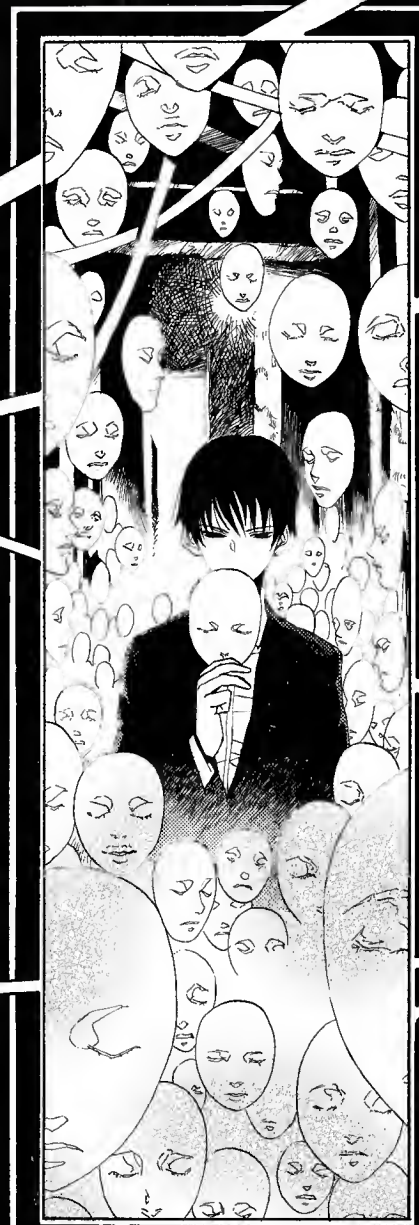



YOU SHOULD HAVE BEEN THE ONE TO DIE...


ARE YOU AWAKE?
!
!!!
WHO ARE YOU?


YOU CAN'T TELL?
IT'S ME.
!
THERE ARE PEOPLE *WHO* KILL AND PEOPLE WHO *ARE* KILLED. AND...
...IN THIS CASE, YOU ARE THE LATTER.

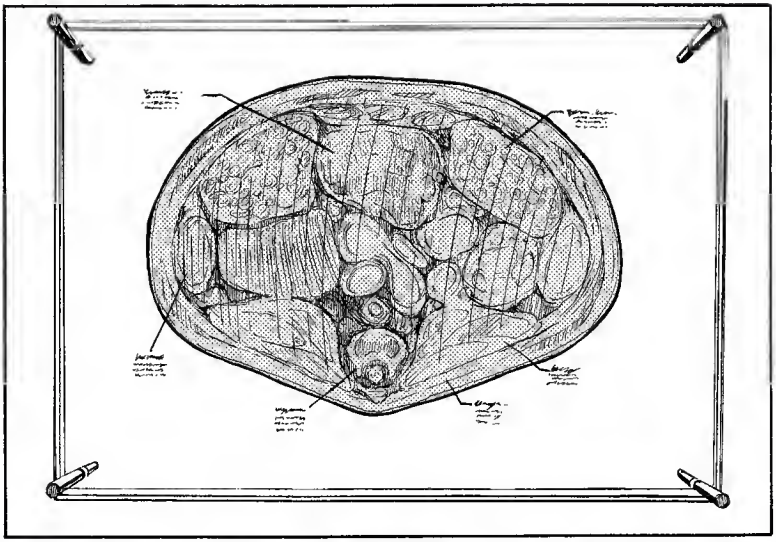

AND...
...I...
...AM THE FORMER.

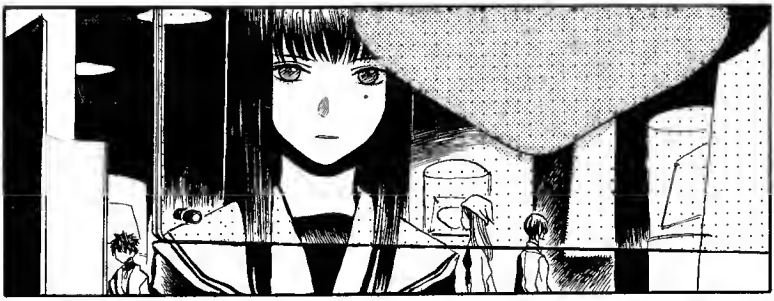


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Twins II

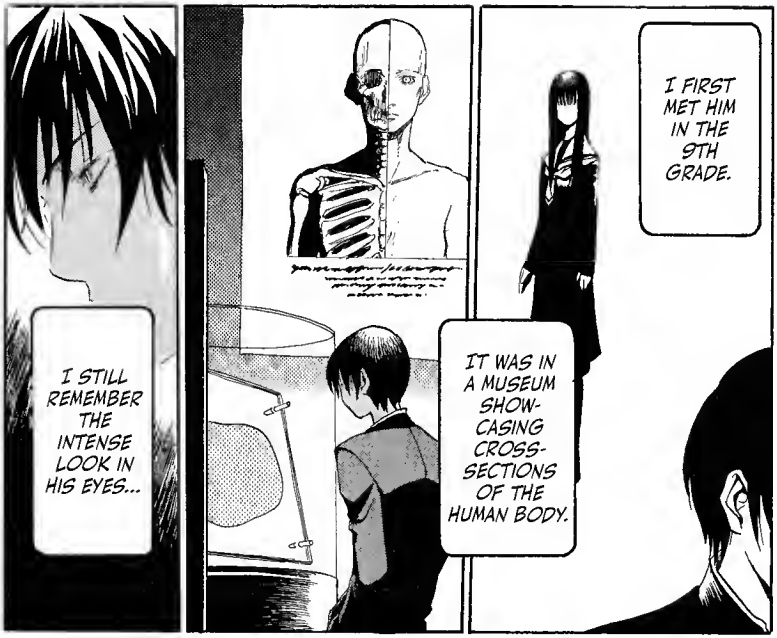




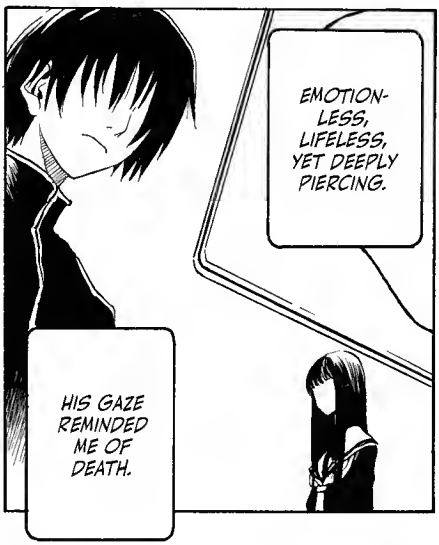








SO I KNEW FROM THE START THAT HE WAS DANGEROUS.



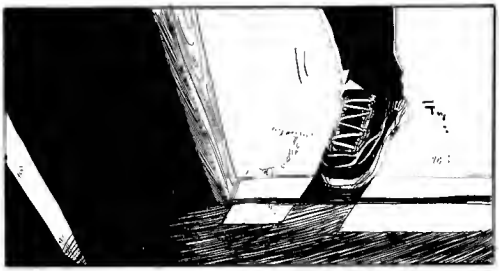

AMONG PEOPLE...
AND...
...THERE ARE THOSE *WHO* KILL AND THOSE WHO *ARE* KILLED.
...I AM THE FORMER.


I HAD A FEELING...
...THAT A DAY LIKE THIS WOULD COME.
...GOING TO DIE HERE?
AM I...
YOU DIDN'T RESIST ME EVEN THOUGH YOU KNEW YOU WOULD BE KILLED.
IS IT BECAUSE OF WHAT HAPPENED WITH YOUR SISTER? OR...


DO YOU WANT TO BE KILLED BY ME?
LET'S TALK FOR A BIT.
I'VE BEEN...
...VERY INTERESTED IN YOU FOR QUITE A WHILE NOW.
TO BE HONEST, THERE'S A CHANCE I MIGHT HAVE BEEN IN LOVE WITH YOU.


I WOULD THINK, "I WANT TO CUT UP HER FLESH."
YES...
I MADE THE CORPSE IN THAT PHOTO.
SO...
...THAT PHOTO...?
EVERY DAY, THE DESIRE GOT STRONGER...
...THAT COULD SATISFY ME.
IT WAS THE ONLY THING...
AND FINALLY, I COULDN'T BEAR IT ANY LONGER. I KILLED SOMEONE, HERE IN THIS ABANDONED BUILDING.


I WANTED TO KNOW YOUR PAST FOR SIMILAR REASONS.



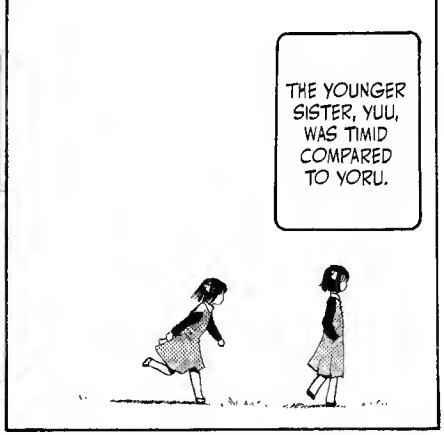




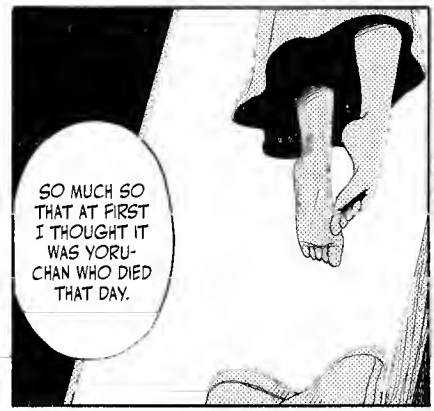



ARE YOU YORU-CHAN'S FRIEND?
WELCOME.
NOD
I REMEMBER HER VERY WELL.
I HEARD THAT HER SISTER WAS FOUND IN THIS SHED.
AH... ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT YUU-CHAN?


ALWAYS STUCK BEHIND HER OLDER SISTER YORU'S BACK.

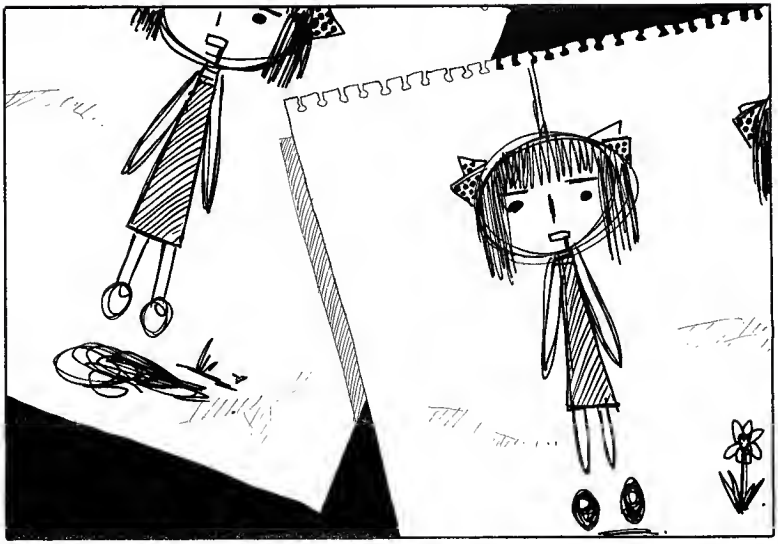

THE YOUNGER SISTER, YUU, WAS TIMID COMPARED TO YORU.


STILL, YUU NEVER TRIED TO GET AWAY FROM YORU.
YORU REALLY DISLIKED THAT, AND IT SEEMED LIKE SHE MADE YUU CRY ALL THE TIME.

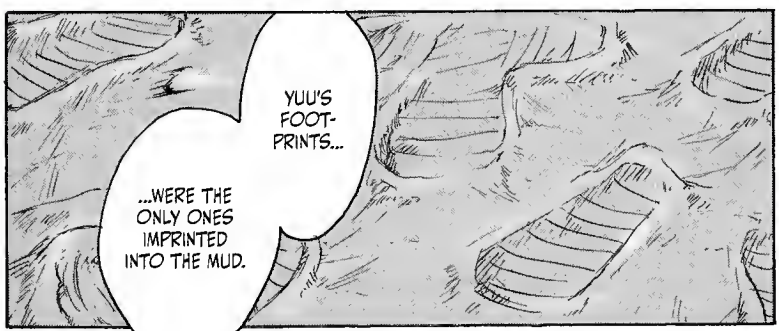

SO MUCH SO THAT AT FIRST I THOUGHT IT WAS YORU-CHAN WHO DIED THAT DAY.


THAT MADE IT DIFFICULT TO TELL THEM APART, SINCE THEY WERE TRULY IDENTICAL.


IF THEY WERE SO SIMILAR...
HOW DID YOU END UP TELLING THEM APART?
YORU WORE BLACK SHOES AND YUU WORE WHITE SHOES.
IT WAS THEIR SHOES.
WE HAD THEM WEAR DIFFERENT SHOES.
AREN'T THEY WEARING DIFFERENT SHOES?
HERE THEY ARE. TAKE A LOOK.
OH...
THERE SHOULD BE SOME OF THEIR DRAWINGS LEFT IN HERE.




...I KNEW IT WAS YUU BECAUSE THE SHOES KICKED OFF WERE WHITE.
THAT'S WHY, THAT DAY...


YUU'S FOOT-PRINTS...
...WERE THE ONLY ONES IMPRINTED INTO THE MUD.


BUT I REMEMBER THE WAY YORU LOOKED THAT NIGHT.
SHE JUST STOOD STILL AND DIDN'T EVEN CRY UPON SEEING HER SISTER'S DEATH...
YORU'S FOOTPRINTS WEREN'T THERE?
APPARENTLY THEY DIDN'T PLAY TOGETHER THAT DAY.
YORU WAS A STRONG GIRL BY NATURE. SHE NEVER CRIED OR LAUGHED, BUT...
I THINK FROM THAT INCIDENT ON, SHE BECAME EVEN STRONGER.


...THAT DRAWING RAISED A QUESTION IN MY MIND.
HOWEVER...


THE GIRL PICTURED IN YOUR SISTER'S DRAWING IS WEARING SHOES.


WHY DID YOUR SISTER KILL HERSELF WITH HER SHOES OFF?


WAS YOUR SISTER AWARE OF THE STRANGE CUSTOM...
...THAT PEOPLE TAKE OFF THEIR SHOES WHEN THEY COMMIT SUICIDE?

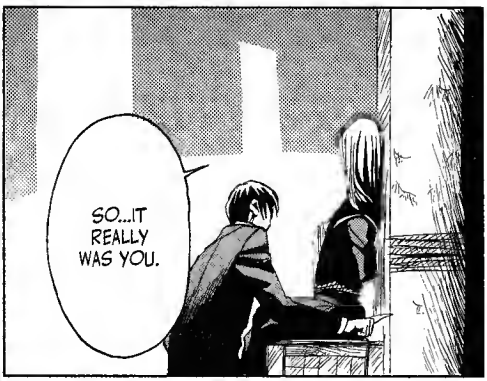

NO, SHE COULDN'T HAVE KNOWN.
SHE WAS JUST GIVEN ORDERS TO PRETEND TO HANG HERSELF...
...AND THEN YOU TOOK HER SHOES OFF...
...AND KILLED HER.

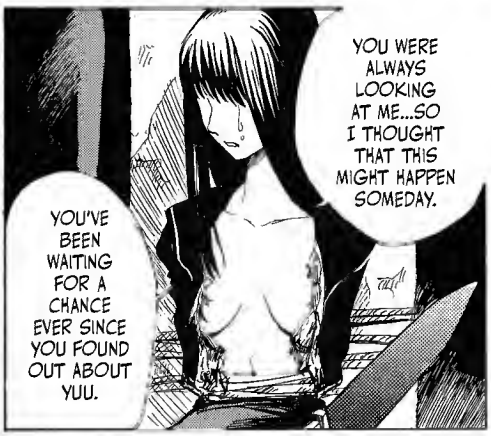

NO.
I DIDN'T KILL HER.
NO, YOU KILLED HER.
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE. THE ONLY FOOTPRINTS THERE WERE YUU'S.

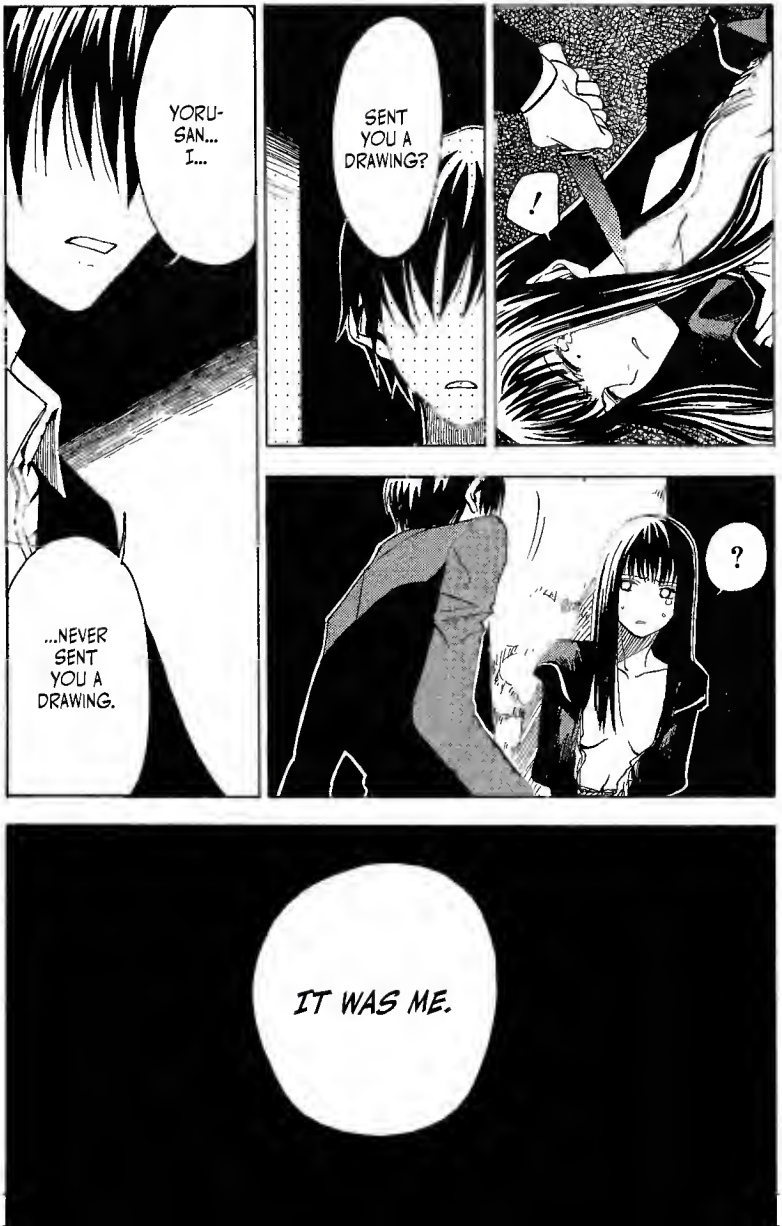

I UNDER-STAND.
.....!
.....
ISN'T THE REASON WHY YOU'RE SO PREOCCUPIED WITH YOUR PAST...
...BECAUSE YOU'VE BEEN FEELING GUILTY ABOUT KILLING SOMEONE ALL THIS TIME?
YORU MORINO... YOU'RE JUST LIKE ME.




THEN...
...YOU SENT ME THAT DRAWING.


SO...IT REALLY WAS YOU.


YOU'VE BEEN WAITING FOR A CHANCE EVER SINCE YOU FOUND OUT ABOUT YUU.
YOU WERE ALWAYS LOOKING AT ME...SO I THOUGHT THAT THIS MIGHT HAPPEN SOMEDAY.


YORU-SAN... I....
...NEVER SENT YOU A DRAWING.
SENT YOU A DRAWING?
!
?
IT WAS ME.




AM I INTRUDING?
YUU MORINO ...

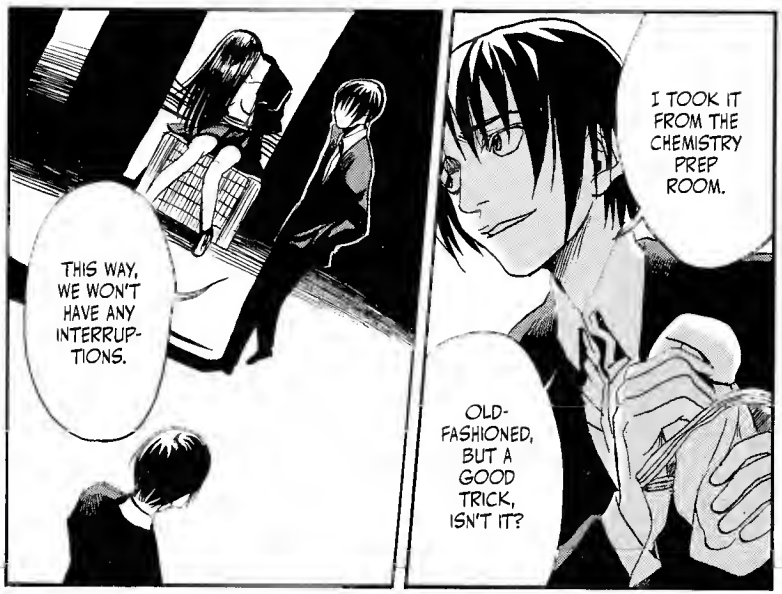

KAMIYAMA-KUN!
...YUU?
I WAS ALSO INTERESTED IN HER SISTER, SO I WAS DOING SOME RESEARCH.
BUT THERE WAS ONE THING THAT I GOT HUNG UP ON.
THE PLACEMENT OF THE SHOES.
IF IT'S SOMEONE THAT KNOWS THE CUSTOM OF TAKING OFF THE SHOES BEFORE HANGING HERSELF....
...THEN SHE WOULD ALSO KNOW THAT THEY SHOULD BE NEATLY ARRANGED.


HOW-EVER...
...ACCO-RDING TO MORINO'S GRAND-MOTHER'S STORY...
...THE SHOES WERE TAKEN OFF HAPHAZARDLY.
IF YOU WERE REALLY YORU, YOU WOULDN'T MAKE A MISTAKE LIKE THAT.
IN OTHER WORDS, THE ONE ACTING OUT THE HANGING THAT DAY WAS YORU...
...AND YUU WAS THE ONE WHO KILLED HER BY CUTTING THE ROPE.
THAT NIGHT, YORU'S FOOTPRINTS WERE NOT THERE BECAUSE SHE WASN'T WEARING SHOES.
THEN, YOU SAW YOUR OWN FOOTSTEPS AND THOUGHT UP THE IDEA OF TRADING PLACES WITH YORU.


ISN'T THAT TRUE, YUU MORINO?
YEAH.
WERE YOU...
...FOLLOWING ME?
EVER SINCE I FOUND OUT IT WAS YOU, I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU...
.....
...TAKAMI.
...I REALIZED THAT THAT PERSON WAS SNIFFING AROUND MORINO.
THE STUDENT IN THE NEXT DOOR CLASS WHO GAVE HER A PHOTO OF THE SAVAGE MURDER...


ITSUKI KAMIYAMA...
I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE WE HAD THE SAME CLASS IN OUR FIRST YEAR.
I COULD NEVER GET CLOSE TO HER, THANKS TO YOU.


!


I TOOK IT FROM THE CHEMISTRY PREP ROOM.
OLD-FASHIONED, BUT A GOOD TRICK, ISN'T IT?
THIS WAY, WE WON'T HAVE ANY INTERRUP-TIONS.




SHIT!



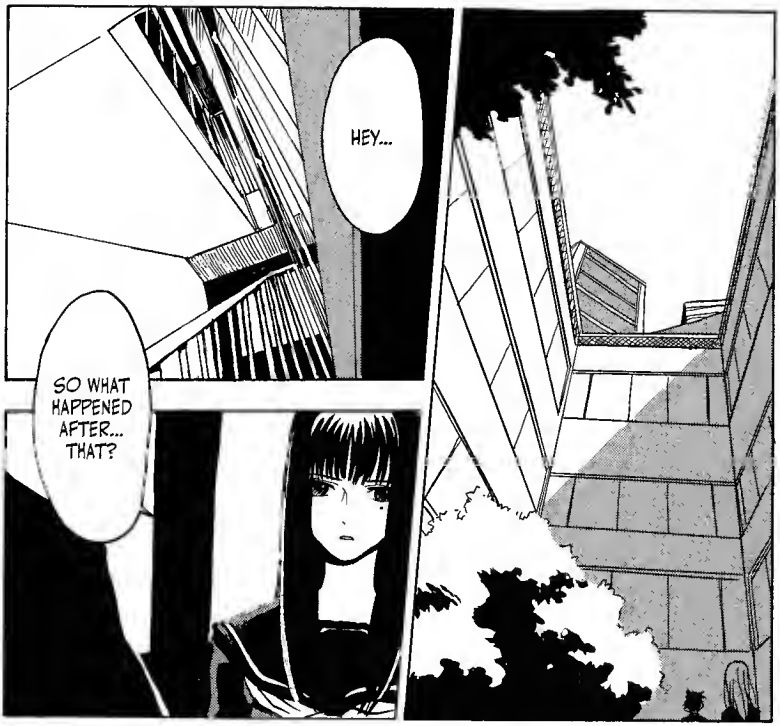

UGH...
COUGH...


AH... D-DIDN'T SEE THAT ONE...
... COMING ...

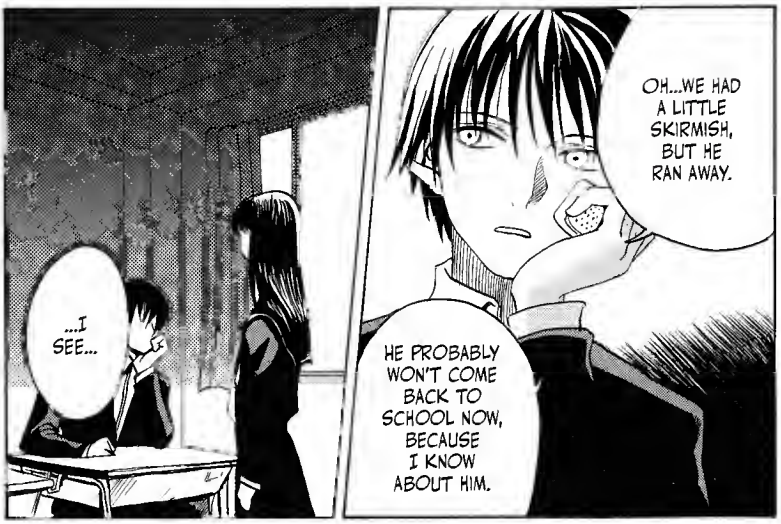
FOUR HOURS HAD ALREADY PASSED WHEN I REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS AND MY ROPES HAD BEEN UNTIED.

THERE WAS NO TRACE OF THEM LEFT EXCEPT FOR A HUGE...

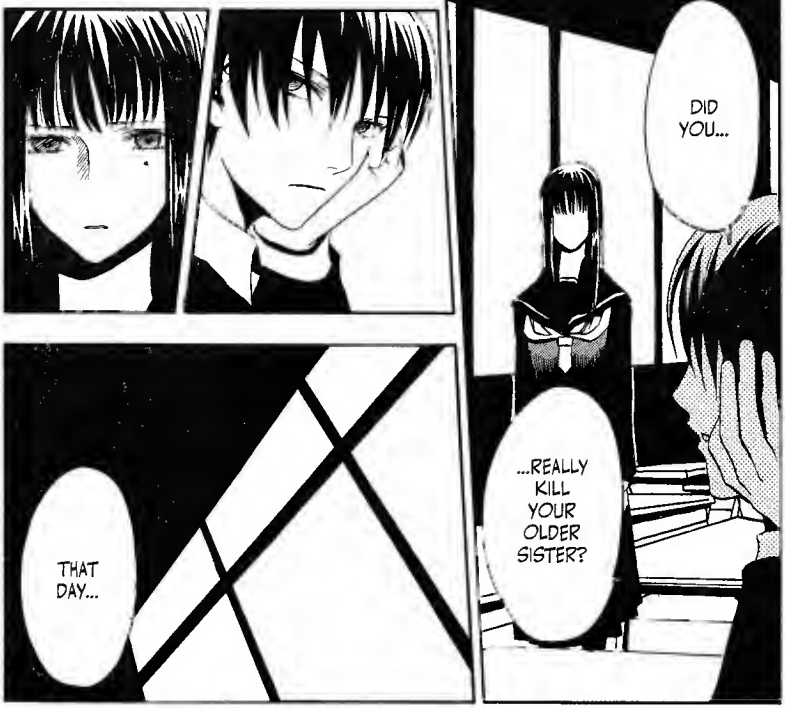
...AMOUNT OF BLOOD ON THE FLOOR.

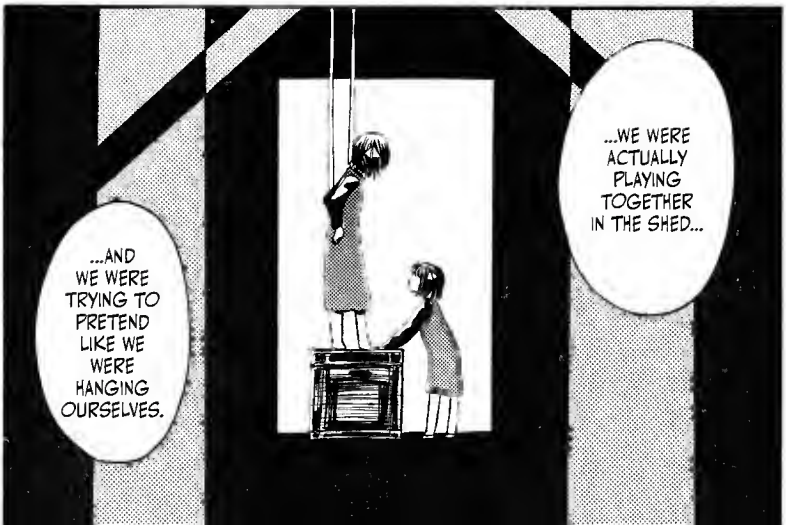



WHAT HAPPENED... TO THE GUY THAT TRIED TO KILL ME?
You're hurt!
NOTHING, REALLY.
LIAR!!


...I SEE...
HE PROBABLY WON'T COME BACK TO SCHOOL NOW, BECAUSE I KNOW ABOUT HIM.
OH...WE HAD A LITTLE SKIRMISH, BUT HE RAN AWAY.


I TOLD A LIE...
TRUTH IS, I BURIED HIS BODY BEHIND THAT ABANDONED BUILDING.
THERE'S JUST GRASS AND AN ILLEGAL DUMP.
PROBABLY WON'T BE ANY NEW BUILDINGS FOR THE NEXT COUPLE OF YEARS.


DID YOU...
...REALLY KILL YOUR OLDER SISTER?
THAT DAY...


...WE WERE ACTUALLY PLAYING TOGETHER IN THE SHED...
...AND WE WERE TRYING TO PRETEND LIKE WE WERE HANGING OURSELVES.

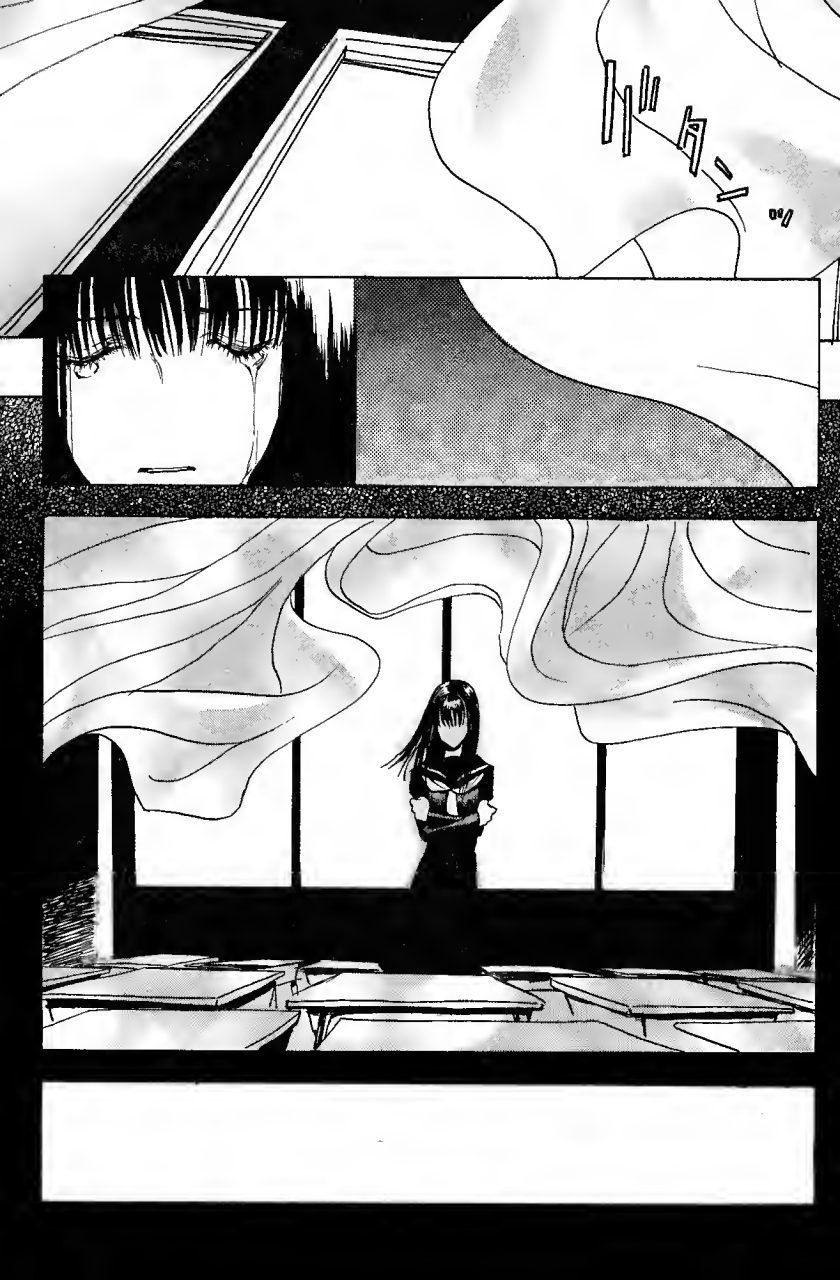

...BUT THAT'S WHEN IT HAPPENED...
...THE ROPE THAT WAS SUPPOSED TO SUPPORT MY SISTER BROKE.
すっ


I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH STRENGTH SO I DESPERATELY HELD ON TO HER AS SHE RAGED WITH PAIN.
SHE KICKED ME IN THE STOMACH SEVERAL TIMES. I EMBRACED HER FROM BEHIND BECAUSE I DIDN'T WANT TO LET HER DIE...


GET IT TOGE-THER!
YOU IDIOT!!
BUT...
ｶﾞｸﾞ
WHAT ARE YOU DOING!! HURRY UP AND SAVE ME.
RIGHT WHEN I HEARD THAT...
...ALL THE STRENGTH I WAS PUTTING IN TO HOLD HER UP DRAINED OUT.


RUFF!
RUFF!
THAT'S WHEN I REALIZED MY OWN FOOT-PRINTS WERE EVERY-WHERE.
LOOKING AT THEM, I DECIDED TO POSE AS MY SISTER.
THAT DAY, I GUESS I ALSO KILLED THE CRYBABY "YUU MORINO."
FROM THEN ON, I STOPPED SMILING IN FRONT OF PEOPLE.


IF...
BUT...
I HAD A FEELING YOU WOULD BE THE FIRST ONE...
...TO CALL ME BY MY REAL NAME.
IF YOU EVER WANT TO DIE AGAIN...
...THEN...
...I'LL KILL YOU.


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Contents

POSTSCRIPT: THE MAKING OF *GOTH*, THE MANGA--OTSUICHI

THIS IS THE MANGA VERSION BY KENDI OIWA OF THE NOVEL PUBLISHED BY KADOKAWA SHOTEN, *GOTH*. THE STORY IS ABOUT A HIGH SCHOOL COUPLE, "ME" AND "MORINO," WHO HAVE A SPECIAL HOBBY AND, FOR SOME REASON, ALWAYS GET TANGLED UP IN MURDER MYSTERIES. IT'S ABSOLUTELY STRANGE HOW THEY GET INVOLVED IN A MURDER CASE EVERY SINGLE TIME, BUT THEY CONVENIENTLY DO SO. THEY ARE ABSOLUTELY IDIOTIC. HOWEVER, I CAN ALSO INFER THAT THEY GET INVOLVED ON PURPOSE BECAUSE UNLESS THEY DO, THERE IS NOTHING TO WRITE ABOUT. WHAT A NONSENSICAL SERIES... I THINK THE AUTHOR IS A LITTLE STUPID. THAT AUTHOR IS ME, THE ONE WHO'S WRITING THIS SENTENCE. THE ORIGINAL NOVEL WAS A COLLECTION OF SIX SHORT STORIES. EACH STORY COVERED IN THIS BOOK HAS BEEN CONVERTED INTO MANGA AND PUBLISHED IN A MAGAZINE CALLED "SHONEN ACE." IT IS ALSO KENDI OIWA-SENSEI'S FIRST BOOK. HE DRAWS VERY ENTICING ART. WHEN PEOPLE LAID EYES ON HIS ILLUSTRATION OF THE FEMALE CHARACTER MORINO, EVERYONE AGREED THAT IT WAS "THE SPITTING IMAGE OF THE CHARACTER FROM THE NOVEL." FOR AN ARTIST WITH SUCH A PROMISING FUTURE LIKE OIWA-SENSEI, I WONDER HOW APPROPRIATE IT IS THAT HIS FIRST COMIC BOOK IS BASED ON A NOVEL LIKE THIS. WHEN OIWA-SENSEI BECOMES A HIT FOURS YEARS DOWN THE ROAD WITH SOME MANGA, I'M WORRIED THAT HE'S PROBABLY GOING TO WANT TO ERASE THE RECORD THAT HE EVER DID THE ILLUSTRATIONS FOR *GOTH*. I CAN IMAGINE HIS DISCONTENTED FACE WHEN A REPORTER INTERVIEWING HIM ABOUT THE "SECRETS TO SUCCESS" INADVERTENTLY ASKS HIM ABOUT *GOTH*. THAT'S MEAN, OIWA-SENSEI, YOU WENT *TOO* FAR.

SPEAKING OF WHICH, I PLAN TO DISCUSS A LITTLE BIT ABOUT WHAT THE TITLE, *GOTH*, MEANS. IN MY NOVEL, I EXPLAINED IN A ROUNDABOUT MANNER THAT GOTH IS "A CULTURE, A FASHION AND A STYLE." I WAS A LITTLE WORRIED ABOUT WHETHER OR NOT I COULD WRITE IN SUCH AN IRRESPONSIBLE MANNER. HOWEVER, IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT TO DEFINE GOTH WITH ONE WORD. FOR EXAMPLE, IT IS PROBABLY APPROPRIATE TO CALL PEOPLE WHO WEAR BLACK CLOTHES AND PALE MAKEUP WITH METAL CROSS ACCESSORIES GOTH. IN ONE OF HIS ARTICLES, A FILM CRITIC CALLED ACTRESS ANGELINA JOLIE GOTH FOR COLLECTING EXECUTION EQUIPMENT AT HER HOME. IN OTHER WORDS, IN SUB-CULTURAL LANGUAGE, PEOPLE LIKE THAT ARE COLLECTIVELY REFERRED TO AS GOTH. BY THE WAY, THE CONCEPT OF THIS PIECE IS VERY SIMPLE: "EACH TIME THE MANY MONSTERS WHO APPEAR IN THE STORIES ATTACK THE HEROINE, THE HERO SUBTLY SAVES HER." IT'S A CLICHED FANTASY STORY THAT'S BEEN AROUND FOR QUITE SOME TIME. I JUST SUBSTITUTED MONSTERS, DEVILS, VAMPIRES AND WEREWOLVES WITH ABNORMAL CRIMINALS. I'M GOING TO UNVEIL RIGHT NOW THAT PRINCESS PEACH, WHO FOR SOME REASON GETS ATTACKED BY KOOPA EVERY SINGLE TIME, EQUALS MORINO. I NEVER INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE THE INTERNAL ASPECTS OF THESE ABNORMAL CRIMINALS, NOR DID I WANT TO ILLUSTRATE ABNORMAL MURDERS. WHAT I HAD IN MIND WAS JUST THE DESIRE TO MAKE IT INTERESTING FOR THE READERS. I JUST PORTRAYED A SUITABLE DEPICTION OF ABNORMAL PSYCHOLOGY THAT THE READER WOULD GET ADDICTED TO AND THERE WAS A NEED TO WRITE ABOUT A MURDEROUS SITUATION THAT WOULD PORTRAY THE ATROCIOUSNESS OF THE ENEMY. ACTUALLY, I HAD NO INTEREST IN WRITING ABOUT SUCH CRUEL MURDERS. PLEASE DON'T GET ME WRONG THERE. I'M SERIOUS. I CAN'T POSSIBLY BE WRITING THIS FOR FUN. ANYWAY, THANK YOU SO MUCH TO THE READERS WHO TOOK THE TIME TO READ THIS. THANK YOU OIWA-SENSEI, WHO MADE THE COMIC BOOK MORE EROTIC THAN THE ORIGINAL NOVEL, FOR WORKING SO HARD. INCIDENTALLY, I'M GOING TO INFORM THE READERS WHO ENJOYED THE MANGA VERSION OF *GOTH*--IN THE NOVEL, THERE ARE MORE STORIES THAT YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT, INCLUDING SOME WITH DIFFERENT OUTCOMES.